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ABSTRACT

KOREAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MISSION: EXPLORING THE MISSIONAL IDENTITY OF KOREAN IMMIGRANT CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

Sinyil Kim

This is a study of Korean immigrants and their mission, investigating the way Scripture, self-identity, and mission are understood among Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada. The rationale for study was the observation that even though Korean immigrants have often formed very church-centered communities and are involved in mission in many ways, their sense of Christian identity as immigrants, and the missional implications of this status, remain largely undeveloped.

Through inductive study, employing grounded theory, including interviews and onsite visits, six Korean immigrant churches were analyzed. The research highlighted several key concepts and issues. These issues were further analyzed in the light of history, culture, Scripture, social location, and social change, employing a synthetic model of contextual theology.

This study concluded that the teaching of biblical truth in the light of immigration, a deeper understanding of Korean immigrant history, and new transformative theological paradigms can result in Korean immigrant Christians' identity transformation. This personal and communal identity transformation enables Korean immigrant churches and Christians to discover their missional potential as they build constructively upon their unique immigrant experiences.

This empirical, historical, social, biblical, theological, and missiological study shows the strategic value of the Korean *Diaspora* for world mission. It highlights the importance of Scripture, self-identity, and mission as key elements in developing a contextualized mission theology. The study can thus be a practical resource for mission ministry to Korean immigrants, and may stimulate mission ministry among other ethnic immigrant Christians in the United States and Canada.

Recommendations are made for further effective service for world mission, such as developing a discipling program, investigating Korean immigrants' unique portion of the world mission enterprise, practicing similar research in different settings of both Korean *Diaspora* and other ethnic *Diaspora*, and developing a contextualized and transformational leadership model for helping develop an active involvement for world mission.

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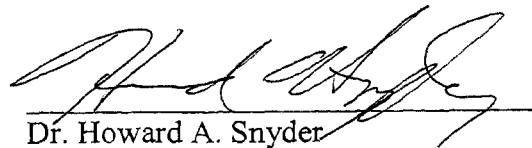
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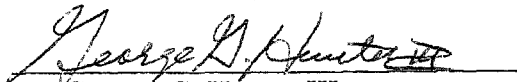
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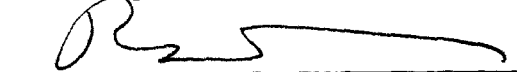
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Dr. Howard A. Snyder



Dr. George G. Hunter III



Dr. Russell W. West

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**KOREAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MISSION:
EXPLORING THE MISSIONAL IDENTITY OF KOREAN IMMIGRANT
CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA**

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Howard A. Snyder, Mentor

Dr. George G. Hunter III, Reader

Dr. Russell W. West, Reader

By

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This dissertation is, therefore, a result of my studies at Asbury and a stepping-stone for my future ministry for the kingdom of God. Although it has not been easy, I have not been alone because God has given me many friends who shared the same life’s direction. So I express my deepest gratitude to the following people who assisted me in the completion of this study:

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Chapter 1

The Missional Significance and Potential of Korean Immigrants in the United States and Canada

In this age of globalization, one of the “globalized” people groups, one of the widely dispersed people groups, are Koreans. Several authors observe that while Jewish people live in 92 countries and Chinese people live in 130 countries, more than 7 million Koreans now live in 180 countries (Won Seol Lee 2004:13; Hyung Jong Kim 1998:8; Overseas Koreans Foundation 2007). Whether this data is fully accurate or not, still it is clear that the number of Koreans scattered around the world is very substantial. According to the ratio of Korea’s population, per capita, there are more expatriate Koreans than those from any other nation.

Korean Immigrants in the United States and Canada

According to statistical data from 2007, some 7,044,716 Koreans live outside Korea around the world, including 2,233,539 residing in the United States and Canada (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2007) as both U.S. and Canadian citizens and Korean citizens. Most Koreans in the United States and Canada are the result of immigration during the last 100 years (the majority moved in the last 40 years).

This immigration phenomenon is remarkable because few Koreans had rarely, if ever, left their small and limited territory for more than five thousand years. Although the concept of “immigration” was thus relatively novel for them, the rapid spreading of Koreans throughout the world today is a reality. As a result, many Korean immigrant Christians have repeatedly asked, “What is God’s will in creating such a huge change

to both Korean individuals as well as the nation? And if God's hand is in this, what is the historical responsibility of Korean immigrant Christians?"

These questions are closely related to the distinctive self-consciousness of Korean immigrant Christians. There is a profound difference between Korean immigrants and Chinese or Japanese immigrants. A popular Korean saying suggests this difference: "When two Japanese meet, they set up a business firm; when two Chinese meet, they open up a Chinese restaurant; and when two Koreans meet, they establish a church" (Hurh and Kim 1990:19-20). Indeed, over 70 percent of Korean Americans regularly attend approximately 3,500 Korean churches every Sunday, according to Min and Kim (Min and Kim 2002:205).

Even though this figure is gradually changing, the influence of Christianity among the Korean immigrant community is still powerful. For example, 65 percent of Korean Americans in 2006 were Protestants, and if the Roman Catholic population is included, 79 percent of Korean Americans are Christians (*Christian Today* 2006). Stephen Warner comments: "Korean Americans are so well organized religiously and so reflective about their religious experiences in the United States that they offer the student of American religion an ideal opportunity to explore the parameters of recent change" (Warner 2001:25).

Korean Immigrant Christianity and Missional Potential

The church has been the center of most Korean immigrants' lives; it has taken the role of "home and resource" for them. In 2007, there were reportedly 3,766 Korean churches in the United States and 382 churches in Canada (*Christian Today* 2008). This shows that Christianity has been very important to Korean immigrants.

Furthermore, Korean immigrant Christians have abundant resources for world mission formed from their immigrant experience.

Today, it is estimated that there are 17,697 Korean long-term missionaries sent out by 58 denominations and 196 mission organizations around the world (KWMA 2008), and KWMA (The Korean World Missions Association) estimates this would be more than 19,000 missionaries if it included 5,000 more sent by local churches (*Christian Today* 2006). As of 2006, the missionary sending phenomenon was continuing; South Korea sending out more than 1,100 new missionaries annually (Moll 2006:30). In the case of the Korean immigrant church, around 600 Korean American missionaries reportedly were serving globally in 2002 (Hong 2002:94). Moll estimates, “South Korea sends more missionaries than any country but the U.S. And it won’t be long before it’s number one” (Moll 2006:28). Many Korean Christians see a huge opportunity and responsibility to engage in God’s global mission today. A similar attitude can also be found among Korean immigrant Christians.

Indeed, Koreans’ passion for mission is well known and has also affected Korean immigrant Christians’ lifestyle in the United States and Canada. Like other immigrants, Korean immigrants have experienced cultural dynamics such as assimilation, acculturation and cross-cultural communication. They have also struggled with how to survive in another culture and how to relate with the majority population. In addition, many Korean immigrants are now bilingual and have significant financial resources to commit to the will of God. Korean immigrant Christians, it appears, are ready to wholly devote themselves to world mission cross-culturally.

Korean Immigrants and Marginality

Although the majority of Korean immigrant Christians in North America have formed a strong church-centered community, they have often struggled with marginalization issues. Sometimes these issues and attitudes become obstacles for active participation in Christian work. Of course this is an understandable phenomenon, considering the difficulties of living in and adapting to a foreign country.

When Koreans first moved to North America, overwhelming difficulties awaited them. Just as the Israelites struggled with many problems in the wilderness and finally set up their faith in Yahweh, Korean immigrant Christians struggled with difficult issues and searched for their faith in a new context. Koreans have encountered materialism, racism, and inner/outer issues such as language and various cultural, occupational, and generational issues. These struggles have characterized the Korean immigrant Christians' lives, which has also been true with other immigrant groups.

All of the above-mentioned components have affected Korean immigrant Christians' struggle with marginalization. In fact, the issue of marginality has been closely tied with Korean immigrant history in North America, and some argue that it is the main factor in keeping Korean immigrants from advancing further. As a people group relatively new to immigration, many Korean immigrant Christians have remained passive or felt victimized in their being and doing. Although some Korean immigrant churches have devoted themselves to mission work, it appears they have carried out their mission practice without dealing adequately with this marginality issue. They served in missions without maximizing the missional potential that could arise out of their particular immigrant and marginalized experience. Elaborating on my own experience as a Korean immigrant Christian may help clarify this issue.

A Korean immigrant Christian Personal Story regarding Identity Transformation

After becoming a Korean immigrant in Canada in 1997, I struggled with marginality issues including culture shock, linguistic shock, generational shock, and even racial discrimination. Among these, the most difficult and fundamental issue was the issue of a new identity in every area of my life: “Who am I? What does this new context mean? What should I do for my life?” During that transitional period, I completely lost my past social status and role.

In Korea, I was an educated person with a respected job and could do almost everything I wanted. However, in my new immigrant situation, I could not go shopping, speak freely, get a car, or even take my child to a doctor. Literally, I did not know what to do and where to start, and I actually could not do anything without the help of others. All of my past education and life experience became nothing in adjusting to a different country. Feeling totally lost, I became passive and acquired a victimized perspective towards my life.

As it was the case for me, many new Korean immigrant Christians in the United States and Canada find themselves asking, “Did I make a mistake? Am I in the right place? Is there any meaningfulness in living here as a stranger? What does God want me to do in this strange country? What am I able to do for the kingdom of God as a marginalized ethnic minority here and now?” Just like any other immigrant, my initial struggle with my marginality-related issues was very passive and negative. It was not easy to formulate a valid meaning for life. There was not enough motivation to serve God in the strange context where I had suddenly found myself. All of my previous theology was not very helpful for interpreting my new life. Mere living and mere existence as a Korean immigrant in Canada had become very burdensome for me.

For nearly three years, this passive and negative marginality-related struggle continued taking place until something happened, until I experienced my self-transcending moment, a significant “identity transformation.” Through this experience, suddenly everything around me changed: my meaning and motivation for life, my attitude toward life’s context, my pastoral goals in the church, and so on. What was this experience and how did it happen?

My identity transformation began when I started to read the Scriptures through the eyes of an immigrant. In the year of 2000, three years after my immigration, a thought suddenly crossed my mind, “Wait a minute, many biblical characters are immigrants. Hmm...interesting! Because of their situational changes, they were forced to encounter a different culture, a different society, and a different language similar to what I have been through. They had to struggle with the same issues that I have struggled with. How did they do it?”

From that moment, I read the Scripture with a different approach. I began to identify my life as an immigrant with the thoughts and behaviors of the people in the Scripture. Their reflection of faith and response to their immigrant situation began to influence me. I was able to identify myself with their response, decision-making, interpretation, and confession to God in their new situation in life. As a result, I developed a new perception of myself, a new understanding of the context, and a new concern of life’s goal.

In other words, I read the Scriptures and considered all of the biblical themes in light of my immigrant and marginalized situation, all of my struggles, including my self-identity, my context identity, and my task identity were positively transformed.

For example, one day I discovered that the Bible relates many important frameworks of moving: moving of Abraham to Canaan, moving of Jacob's family (70 people) into Egypt, moving of the Israelites from Egypt to the wilderness under Moses' leadership, moving and conquering into Canaan under Joshua's leadership, Israel's moving out and returning because of exile and recovery, Jesus' moving into history (incarnation) and his itinerant ministry, believers' spreading from Jerusalem to the Gentile lands, Paul and other church leaders' moving around the world for mission, and similar examples.

This discovery allowed me to identify my immigrant life with these biblical figures who had experienced moving or immigration and being marginalized in their new context. Through this process, I came to experience "identity transformation" regarding my self, context, and task. In other words, suddenly I realized that I, as an immigrant, am a Godly pilgrim who has a holy purpose in life and moving toward it. There are many actual pilgrims in the Bible such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Daniel, and Paul. Even though they had different reasons for becoming pilgrims, all of them gradually came to have consciousness about their pilgrim status either when they left or when they were moving.

Then I also realized that my new context, the margin of a new society, can be a place of God's calling (Genesis 28:10-20; Exodus 3:1-12; Judges 10:2-3), a place of God's training (Daniel 1:8-17; Jonah 2:1-10; Matthew 4:1-11), and a place for a new beginning (1 Kings 19:1-18; Act 8:26; 1 Timothy 3:16).

Furthermore, I realized my new task through reading the Bible from the perspective of an immigrant - that is *shalom*, God's original plan, not just the absence of conflict or "peace of mind" but harmony, right relationship with God and people,

and the proper functions of all elements in the environment (Snyder 2003:19). In other words, I realized that my new task in the new context should be bringing *shalom* in all aspects of my life ethnically (Jonah 1:11-13; Romans 10:12), culturally (Daniel 1:3-21), and spiritually (John 3:16; Acts 16:30-34).

From that time forward, I was no longer victimized as a marginalized Korean immigrant. Rather, I found an exciting meaning of life and a clear vision toward the kingdom of God because I discovered my missional potential and the implication of my life as a Korean immigrant Christian. I call this an “identity transformation” or a “self-transcending moment” of my life. Through this experience, I became a “new being” and an “active instrument” of God for world mission using my Korean immigrant and marginalized experience. That was the most meaningful and transformational experience of my immigrant life. At the same time, my experience suggested that resolving these issues of marginalization through “identity transformation” is one of the most important matters for Korean immigrant Christians and their Christian leaders.

Korean Identity and Korean Christianity

Here, I will discuss a little more about how Korean identity and Korean Christianity identity have been formed, because in this dissertation I must deal with the issue of identity transformation. When we try to understand what it means to be a Korean, most of all, we have to understand the three psychological concepts that have formed Korean identity: *jeong*, *han*, and *uri*.

First of all, *jeong* for Koreans is “a strong feeling of attachment to something or someone who is religiously derivative and is also unwittingly formed in the Koreans’ heart through their long-lasting contact experiences with the given object” (Woocheol Kim 2006:79-80). Secondly, *han* is “a critical wound of their hearts that is generated by

psychosomatic . . . social, political, economic, and cultural oppression; *han* is entrenched in the victims' hearts, and is expressed through such [feelings] as sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, resentment, and hatred" (Andrew Sung Park 1993:10). Lastly, *uri* is "the Koreans' corporate identity of we-ness that is shaped in their heart through their common experiences of hardships, mishaps, joys and blessings in history" (Woocheol Kim 2006:80). For Koreans, "we-are is considered to be more fundamental than I-am or you-are" (Jung Young Lee 1995:8). For this reason, Koreans usually use the collective words "we" and "our" frequently than the individual words "I, my, you, your."

At the same time, these concepts have culturally and religiously been related to Shamanism, which has strongly impacted to form Korean identity. According to Tongshik Ryu, "It was after the fourth century when Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism started coming to Korea. Prior to this, the only ancient religion in Korea was Shamanism" (Ryu 1965:15). Shamanism has continuously affected Korean religion and culture as their basic faith even though state religions were changed by dynasties or governments which ruled Korea (Pil Won Min 2004:13).

Interestingly, as the primitive religion of Korea, Shamanism has influenced religions that came to Korea later such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and even Christianity. Therefore, argues Pil Won Min, Shamanism, not only as a religion but also a culture for Koreans, has shaped Korean lifestyle uniquely in two main aspects: *han* and *shinmyung* (35). Here *Shinmyung* is a dynamic state of enthusiasm. According to Choi, "This *Shinmyung* is a phenomenon found in *Kut*. When a *Mudang* receives spirit in *Kut*, she goes into an ecstasy of *Shinmyung* and plays in *Shinmyung*" (Choi 1998:51).

Therefore, when Koreans say “*Shin nanda*,” it means “I am excited,” and usually they do whatever they do enthusiastically and achieve the results far better than expected.

These characteristics are also evident in Korean Christianity. For example, Shamanism’s favorable attitude toward other religion helped Koreans accept Christianity. The pre-told psychological and religious components have clearly interplayed to form Korean church and its characteristics, which have expressed their cohesive power through the rapid church expansion and missional strength. In addition, Korean Christians have overcome many severe persecutions for their faith during the Japanese colonization and Korean War.

After the liberation of Korea from Japan in 1945, Korean Christians slowly became aware of their mission responsibilities. In the 1960s more than a dozen missionary couples were sent to Brazil, Bolivia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Japan and the U.S.A. The decade of the 1970s was the “great” decade for the Korean church. The church growth was unprecedented and the awakening to missions was phenomenal. The growth rate continued to accelerate in the 1980s and missions awakening continues to deepen (Myung-Hyuk Kim 1995:213).

Today, the Korean church is the second largest missionary-sending country, and almost all local churches talk about mission. Of course, there have been many trials and errors, yet through those, Korean Christians have become more mature for doing missions. Of course, Myung-Hyuk Kim’s self-diagnosis regarding Korean missions is profound: competitive individualism of the Korean church, lack of leadership, lack of qualified missionaries, lack of training, lack of mission policy, and lack of mission theology (213-219). However, the situation has improved, and now Korean Christians

both in and outside Korea look toward the world and actively participate in their mission work.

Toward Transformation

What has been explained up to now naturally leads us to the next series of questions. How can Korean immigrant Christians overcome these marginality-related issues in order to become more active and effective instruments of God's salvific movement? How can Korean immigrant Christians form a creative and positive identity as they struggle through such issues? Furthermore, how can their marginality issue be turned into a resource for active world mission? How might they meld the factors of biblical truth, immigrant marginality, and mission to produce creative and positive identity transformation both personally and congregationally? And what missional implications can be articulated by researching these issues?

These are the points of departure for my research. It can be argued that God has blessed Korea immensely during the last century through remarkable church growth and mission expansion and that God wants to raise Koreans to be an increasingly effective instrument for world mission today. Korea has now become a remarkable missionary-sending country in spite of its relatively short Christian history of about one hundred years. Many Korean Christians believe that God has been active in Korean history, church growth, and global dispersion, preparing them for a key role in Christian mission. (While I share this view, the research proposed here is dependant on the affirmation of this belief).

From my preliminary studies, I became aware of the following realities: Korean immigrant Christians have many potentials and strengths to offer to world missions. At the same time, they also have many obstacles that need to be overcome for mission

work. Their Koreanized Christianity and immigrant experience with marginalized issues provide unique potentials and practices for world mission, and therefore, Korean immigrant Christians in the United States and Canada can play a key role in world missions. Studying these concerns is very important because it can provide Korean immigrant Christians with a new meaning and motivation toward world mission. Developing a viable contextualized mission theology in light of these issues is imperative.

Statement of the Problem

From 1902 to the present, Korean immigrants have planted more than four thousand churches in the United States and Canada. However, despite their rapid church growth and growing missional practice, Korean immigrant churches have not clearly articulated their Christian identity in terms of their immigrant experience and its missional implications. Even though a few (not many) Korean immigrant churches in the United States and Canada have focused on mission, their cognition of immigrant Christian identity and missional implication has still been random and incomplete.

As addressed earlier through my own experience, experiencing personal and congregational identity transformation and realizing the missional implications of Korean immigrant Christians are very important because these can stimulate Korean immigrant Christians to discover their missional potential and to maximize their use of missional resources toward the world. In other words, discovering Korean immigrant Christians' missional identity is a very important matter.

Therefore, this research investigates Scripture, self-identity, and mission, primarily through studying six Korean immigrant congregations in the United States and Canada.

Through a qualitative approach, employing grounded theory and other selected theories (as explained later), I sought first to discern and describe how these congregations understood the Scripture, themselves, and their own mission toward the world in terms of their immigrant experience. Then, I synthesized all these data, drawing upon library research and my own experience in mission with Korean immigrant churches, in order to provide informed theological insights to assist Korean immigrant churches to engage in effective world mission today. This research problem is broken down into four subproblems.

1. How do Korean immigrant Christians understand Scripture?
2. How do they understand their Christian identity within their particular context?
3. How do they understand their mission?
4. What do these data mean to Korean immigrant Christians?

Research Questions

For solving these problems, I needed some legitimate research questions as the following:

1. What are the key biblical themes or passages for Korean immigrant Christians? Why do they think these are more important to them? How do those biblical themes or passages impact their lives as Korean immigrant Christians?
2. What are the key characteristics and shaping experiences of Korean immigrant Christians in the United States and Canada? What are their history and uniqueness? What have been their social context and issues particularly with regard to their Christian identity and sense of mission?

3. What problems have they had in their identity formation? How has their assimilation process been? How has their immigrant experience impacted their identity cognition? How do they perceive their Korean immigrant Christian identity?

4. How do they understand their mission? What is the impact of their immigration to their mission practice? How do they describe the relationship between immigration and mission?

5. What key elements that would be important for an authentic contextualized mission theology emerge or can be identified from these data? How would these findings help explore the missional identity of Korean immigrant Churches and Christians in North America?

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I employed many aspects of individual and communal human experience, history, Scripture, culture, and social change. To guide and enrich the study, I used the theoretical frameworks which will be explained below. I distinguished these as the primary theories and the secondary theories, which provided models and theological lenses for the research.

The Primary Theories for the Research

The primary framework for this study is a combination of Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998) and the Synthetic Model of Contextual Theology (Bevans 2004).

Grounded Theory. Most basically, I used the grounded theory for elaborating Korean immigrant Christians' life experiences and theological insights (See pages 30-31).

Synthetic Model of Contextual Theology. In his book, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Bevans distinguishes between “classical theology” and “contextual theology.” “Classical theology” conceives theology as a kind of objective science using the two main sources of Scripture and tradition, the content of which has not and never will be changed, as it is seen as existing above culture and historically conditioned expression. In contrast, “contextual theology” includes context as well such as culture, history, contemporary thought forms as valid sources of theology, alongside Scripture and tradition (Bevans 2004:3-4).

For doing contextual theology, as we see in Figure 1 (p.16), Bevans addresses six models: anthropological, praxis, synthetic, translation, countercultural and transcendental (32). Each model uses its theological materials differently, both from the past (Scripture and tradition) and from the present (human experience, culture, social location, and social change). How to treat these materials provides many different kinds of contextual theologies.

Among these, I employed the synthetic model first for my theologizing. The synthetic model is a middle-of-the-road model, emphasizing both the experience of the present (i. e., context: experience, culture, social location, social change) and the experience of the past (Scripture, tradition). It is never easy because it is painful to maintain the integrity of the traditional message while acknowledging the importance of taking all aspects of context seriously (88-89). Nevertheless, I used this model for doing my theology since I believed that a relevant theology emerged from the complex interaction of the Scripture, tradition, culture, society, and human experience.

For this reason, I began theologizing with my personal experience as an immigrant. I moved to Canada from Korea in 1997, for my theological study and

church ministry. When I moved to the new country I was a typical first immigrant generation since I was twenty-eight years old. I became a Canadian citizen in 2001, and moved once again into the United States for further study at Asbury in 2003; therefore, I am a foreigner who lives in America as a Korean-Canadian Christian.

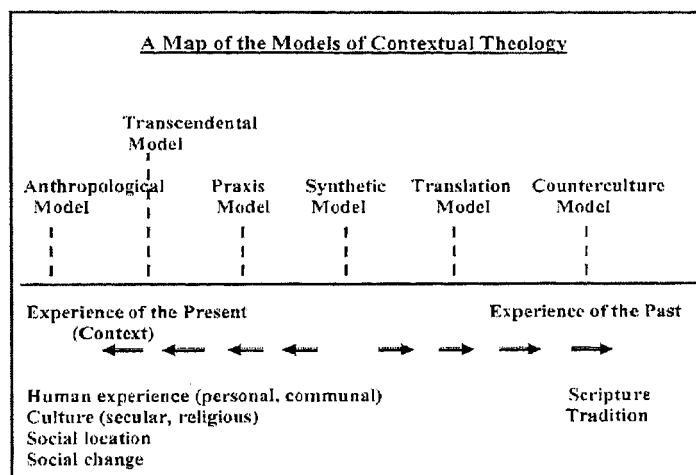


Figure 1: A Map of the Models of Contextual Theology
(Source: Bevens 2004:32)

Along with my human experience, the unique social context I encountered had to be seriously considered as well. This study came out of my existential context where I experienced “moving to another country” and “being marginal” in Canada and the United States. While I read the Bible through an immigrant’s eye, I theologized as a marginalized person, and carried on “mission” from the context of immigrant church. So, I confronted the need for “a” theology for my particular context because I needed faith reflection upon my “immigrant/marginal” situation. I believe that, after all, every theology is, and should be, a contextual theology (Bevens 2004:3).

Generally, theology in North America has been mainly developed and practiced by the white-dominant people group. However, this kind of theology is profoundly limiting for ethnic minorities such as immigrants, migrants, and refugees. Since the

dominant group's context is very different from that of the minority, the theology of the dominant group does not fit well in the context of the people who live on the margins of North American society. Here, the so called "Korean immigrant mission theology" is strongly needed.

Since I used my unique immigrant experience, the cultures I brought and encountered, Scripture as a theological material, and also expected social change, my theological method could initially be considered as the synthetic model of Bevans. As Jung Young Lee (1995) and Kwok Pui-lan (1988) did, I had to use my personal experience as an immigrant for my theologizing. Whenever I think of any theme in the Scripture, it is automatically related to my personal experience. On the other hand, if I experience any particular thing, I always go back to the Scripture to interpret and reflect it in the light of the Scripture. In other words, for Korean immigrant mission theology, my theological method is characterized as the Synthetic model because I use all components of my (Korean immigrants') context – experience, culture, ways of thinking, tradition, and the Scripture.

The Secondary Theories for the Research

In the course of this research, several other theories and models were also examined as the secondary theories; such as Critical Contextualization, Transcendental Model of Contextual Theology, Assimilation and Identity Models, Transformational Leadership Model, Rite of Passage, and four images (Marginality, Pilgrimage, Home, and *Han*) as the theological lens to view. Even though I used these theories and concepts in a limited sense, they were very helpful for understanding the Korean immigrants' context and issues as explained below.

Critical Contextualization. I employed this theory to appropriately interact to/with the context. *This approach consists of four steps: phenomenological analysis, ontological reflection, critical evaluation, and missiological transformation* (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999:21).

The phenomenological analysis enabled me to understand the local context, people, values, and issues in reality. The ontological reflection allowed me to reflect upon the context, people, values and issues in the light of the Scripture; here, the interaction between the reality and the Scripture takes place. The third step, critical evaluation, involved a communal evaluation and an analysis of the decision-making of the community on the basis of their newfound truth. The final step, missiological transformation, concerned the ways in which the community moves from where they are with this discovery to where they should be creatively.

Through these steps, critical contextualization expects an ideal transformation, which is culturally relevant and biblically sounded. In this research, however, I used Critical Contextualization in a limited sense. Even though I employed the first two steps of this theory – phenomenological analysis and ontological reflection – for data collection from the people and the Scripture, I did not take the last two steps – critical evaluation and missiological transformation – because these steps required a communal process employing a hermeneutical community, which was beyond the scope of this research.

Transcendental Model of Contextual Theology. I also used the transcendental model of Contextual Theology because it focuses on the self-transcending subject more than an objective or a produced theology. Bevans explains, “It proposes that the task of constructing a contextualized theology is not about producing a particular body of any

kind of texts; it is about attending to the affective and cognitive operations in the self-transcending subject” (Bevans 2004:103). Since identity transformation of Korean immigrant Christians is one of the ultimate goals of mine, this model, focusing on radical shift – change of mind - in perspective, is very useful.

Hughes insists that contextual theology should both begin and end with the “actual beliefs” held by a group of Christians who are living within a particular geographical and temporal context (Hughes 1984:251). It means that theology has to be connected with a person’s actual beliefs, those that influence his or her behavior and action. I agree. Therefore, for the transcendental model, the ultimate concern is the “self-transcending subject.” Bevans explains:

A fundamental presupposition of the transcendental model is that one begins to theologize contextually not by focusing on the essence of the gospel message or the content of tradition as such, nor even by trying to thematize or analyze a particular context or expression of language in that context. Rather, the starting point is transcendental, concerned with one’s own religious experience and one’s own experience of oneself. (Bevans 2004:104)

From the starting point, theology is conceived as the process of “bringing to speech” who I am or who we are – as a person or persons of faith who are in every possible respect a product of a historical, geographical, social and cultural environment (104). This is what happened in my actual life. All concerns regarding my marginalized situation had begun with my immigrant experience. I had never thought about this issue when I was in Korea, but one day I realized that I was in the middle of this immigrant context. As any immigrant can attest, my initial struggle with my marginality was very passive and negative. It was not easy to get enough meaning out of life as a marginalized person. There was not enough motivation to serve God in that strange context where I had suddenly

been forced to be. All my previous theologies had not been very helpful for interpreting my new life context. However, with my sudden and transcendental change of identity understanding, everything had been changed.

As mentioned above, this transition occurred when I started to read the Scripture through the eye of an immigrant. When I read the Scripture in light of my marginalized situation, everything was transformed. This was the “self-transcending” point for me. After that experience, I have been able to evaluate my own authenticity and have actually done my theologizing as an immigrant. Therefore, after taking the first step of this research to get life experience and issues from Korean immigrants’ actual life, my theological methods are a combination of the synthetic model and the transcendental model. I used history, culture, experience, reason, Scripture, etc., and focused on Korean immigrants Christians’ self-transcending subject. For this research, both synthetic (primary) and transcendental (secondary) models were very useful in the interpretation and reflection of my field research data.

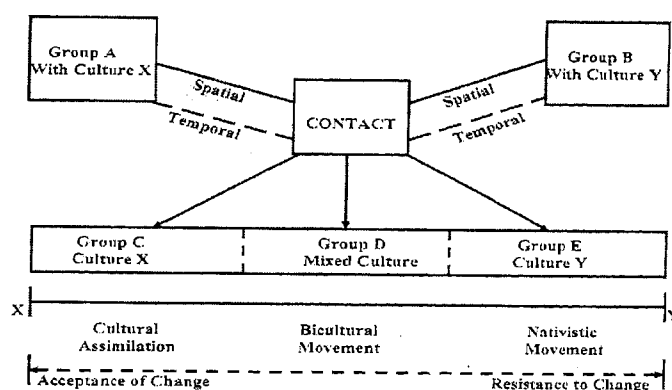


Figure 2: Biacculturation Model
(Source: Chang 1977:137)

Biacculturation Model. Additionally, I employed Chang’s biacculturation model (Chang 1977:136-137) to identify Korean immigrant Christians’ assimilation issue.

According to him, there are five people groups that appear when two cultures come into contact according to their acceptance or resistance rate.

Besides the two original groups (A and B), three new groups can be formed according to their responses as: (1) Group C: Cultural assimilation (2) Group D: Bicultural movement as a Mixed Culture (3) Group E: Nativistic Movement. This model is helpful to understand Korean immigrants' assimilation patterns among cultures. For this research, in particular, it assisted me to understand the interviewees' assimilation and identity cognition pattern.

Transformational Leadership Model

Dealing with leadership issues of Korean immigrant churches was inevitable in this research, and transformational leadership model gave me an effective framework to evaluate leadership issues of six Korean immigrant churches.

The term transformational leadership was first used by Downton (1973), but it was James MacGregor Burns who developed and got people's attention through his book titled *Leadership* (1978). "In his work, Burns attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. He wrote of leaders as those individuals who tap the motives of followers in order to better reach the goals of leaders and followers" (Burns 1978:18, cited in Northouse 2004:170). Burn distinguished between transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges between leaders and followers. In contrast, transformational leadership "refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (170). Therefore, transformational leadership is attentive to the needs and motives of people and tries to help people reach their fullest potential.

For this reason, I believe that transformational leadership is the most appropriate model for Korean immigrant Christians and their mission because this theory deals seriously with the followers' need, motivation, development, and fullest potential. As the scholars insist, transformational leadership is concerned with the performance of followers and also with developing followers to their fullest potential (Avolio 1999; Bass & Avolio 1990a, cited in Northouse 2004:174).

The following four main characteristics of this transformational leadership model were especially useful for Korean immigrant community because of its emphasis on follower's fullest potential, motivation to become committed to vision, stimulation to be creative and innovative, and sensitivity to the follower's needs: (1) Idealized influence: it describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers. They have very high standards of moral and ethical conduct and can be counted on to do the right thing. (2) Inspirational Motivation: this factor is descriptive of leaders who communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring them through motivation to become committed to the shared vision in the organization. (3) Intellectual Stimulation: it includes leadership that stimulates followers to be creative and innovative, and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization. (4) Individualized Consideration: this is representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of the followers (Northouse 2004:174-179). These four important characteristics of Transformational Leadership Model had been used for both data collection and reflection, through examining how the leaderships of six Korean churches have been practiced and influenced for the congregations and through suggesting what leadership

pattern is relevant to bring change in Korean immigrant churches for effective future missional work.

Rite of Passage

The next frame work for this research, the *rite of passage* structure, gave us a useful lens to understand Korean immigrant Christians. Most societies and even religions have a structure that takes a role of changing a group member's role and status from one level to another. Among them, the most representative structure is the so-called *rite of passage*, originally discovered by Gennep and developed more by Turner.

Arnold Van Gennep defines this structure as “rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age” (Turner 1995:94), and Turner later focuses what Gennep called the “liminal phase” of *rites of passage*. They divide a change in society into three stages. The first stage separates people from their original status (separation), the second involves a stage apart from the normal status (liminal) and the final stage provides a new status upon those people (reincorporation).

For Turner, *liminality*, the second stage, means neither here nor there; it is betwixt and between. This stage of *liminality* is the character of being or dwelling for extended periods of time in a spatial, social and spiritual threshold, as pilgrims often do. *Communitas* means special relationships among people who are in transitional period of time and space through which they experience an intense sense of intimacy and equality (95-97). In this *liminality*, people achieve a release from conformity to general norms and may experience a profound and collective sentiment for humanity which includes or is stimulated by the quest and presence of a sacred space, god and spirit.

And these characteristics have been around the world not only in tribal people's lives but also in the lives of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and even Jews.

In the seventh chapter of his book, *Symbols and Ceremony: Making disciples across cultures* (1997), Zahniser interestingly focuses on the discipling function of the *rite of passage*. Through this process, people not only bond to the community but also bond to the beliefs and values of that community. Therefore, he insists, "this function of the *rite of passage* process-bonding to meaning-makes *rites of passage* a powerful tool for discipling" (Zahniser 1997:96). For this reason, I used this structural lens for Korean immigrants, who had experienced the separation, are experiencing the *liminal* stage, expecting change for an effective incorporation.

Theological Lens for Korean Immigrant Christians

Fortunately, there have been three Korean American theologians who had already struggled with their Korean immigrant Christian identity issue, and their theological themes and models become wonderful precedence and lens for this study. Here they are briefly introduced, and the later chapters will provide full details.

1. Marginality. Jung Young Lee's "Theology of Marginality" (1995) allows Asian Americans to determine the answer to the question, "what is the meaning of life as an ethnic minority in America?" Comparing the classic definition of marginality that emphasizes the negative side of marginality and seeks the centrality, his concept of new marginality, drawing from "in-between" to "in-both" and finally to "in-beyond" perspective, proposes a new norm of marginality, the harmony of difference, as a reconciler and a wounded healer. Through love and patience, this new marginality identity can stimulate Korean immigrant Christian's identity transformation for the kingdom of God.

2. Pilgrimage and Home. Sang Hyun Lee's two biblical symbols (1998, 2001) are also helpful to understand Korean immigrant Christians' identity and church. In overcoming the so called Forced Marginality situation, he brings up two biblical symbols – pilgrimage and home – that are important in the Asian American Theology. I used these two symbols to view Korean immigrant Christians and church, and through it, Korean immigrant Christians should be understood as pilgrims, who do not seek permanent settlement in any one place or idea but is always ready to leave the present situation, journeying toward a God-promised goal. Secondly, as mortal humans, Korean immigrant Christians need a hospitable structure for belonging, and church as the “household of God” can be understood as such a community.

3. Han. Andrew Sung Park's “theology of *Han*” brings up the need of healing for Korean immigrants' wounded hearts and scars. Park addresses the concept of ‘han’ as “frustrated hope, the collapsed feeling of pain, letting go, resentful bitterness, and the wounded heart” (Park 1993:31). It can also be understood as “the critical wound of the heart generated by unjust psychosomatic repression, as well as by social, political, economic, and cultural oppression” (10). Park focuses on the fact that the traditional Christian doctrine of sin has not been properly developed for it has focused only on the sinners, not the victims. He demonstrates the shortcoming in the doctrine of sin and suggests its complement through the notion of *han*, in hopes of bringing forth a holistic vision of the salvation of both sinners and their victims (177). This study, therefore, employed his lens of *han* to understand the situation of Korean immigrant Christians as marginalized people group and sought for the genuine reconciliation.

Research Design and Methodology

Through the research, I tried to get answers to the research questions indicated earlier (pp. 13-14). The research involved three approaches: historical/sociological, phenomenological, and integrational approaches as noted below, and each component has been developed as a separate chapter (Chapter 2-6) of this dissertation:

1. Historical and sociological research
2. Phenomenological research
3. Integrational research
 - (1) Biblical Reflection
 - (2) Theological Reflection
 - (3) Missiological Reflection

Methodologically, this research took a qualitative research approach. In his book, *Research Design*, Creswell lists five main strategies for a qualitative research: Ethnographic, Grounded Theory, Case Study, Phenomenological Research, and Narrative (Creswell 2003:14-15). Among those, I employed the grounded theory as the main methodology through studying six Korean immigrant churches. After collecting the data through interviews and observations, I analyzed and reflected those data as the process of doing theology. From there, I expected to propose some missional implications or to suggest further study and ministry. These are described as following steps.

1. Library research: historical, sociological, theological, and missional studies toward Korean immigrant church and its general context.
2. Empirical research: Study of six Korean immigrant churches. Qualitative

research and data collection based on the grounded theory through open-ended dialogues, observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials.

3. Integrational research: Generating, sorting, reflecting data from all of my immigrant ministry, mission experience, interviews, and library research.

4. Report what this study found: Proposing an emerging theory or theories, reporting some principles, revealing some implications, or suggesting further research projects.

Data Collection

For this study, I needed the following data: historical and sociological data of Korean immigrants and their churches in the United States and Canada, empirical data of the six Korean immigrant churches and leaders, and biblical, theological, and missiological data of/for Korean immigrant churches. To collect these data, I used three main methods: library research, church visitations and observations, and interviews.

1. Library Research: I investigated the scholarly articles, journals, books and other electronic materials that provide historical, sociological, theological, biblical, and missiological data for this research. Special emphasis is given to the following themes:

(1) History of Korean immigrants and their immigrant Christian experience in the United States and Canada.

(2) Important sociological issues of Korean immigrant Christians, emerging from their experiences. Identity formation and Marginality issues will get the priority attention of the researcher.

(3) Theological and biblical themes related to migration or moving motif.

(4) Missiological implication of *diasporas* both in the Scripture and in Christian history.

2. Church visitations and observations: My church visitations that led to this dissertation took place in January and February of 2006 (See Table 2. p. 91). There, I initially focused to find out the mission statement, mission strategy and structure, and the history of six Korean immigrant churches because through those efforts I could get ideas of their understanding of the Scripture, identity, and mission.

The following churches had been selected for this research because of their reputation regarding missional vitality and ministry within the Korean immigrant Christian community: Grace Korean Church (Vancouver, BC), Community Church (Seattle, WA), Seoul Korean Church (Houston, TX), Young Nak Korean Church (Toronto, ON), Ken-bit Korean Church (Toronto, ON), Sarang Community Church (Los Angeles, CA).

Criteria used in selecting these six churches included: recommendation in common from many other fellow Korean immigrant pastors and missionaries, constant involvement in mission, number of sending and supporting missionaries, missional training program for the congregation, and church growth through missional outreach. Due to my focus toward ministry of mission, I did not consider the regional and denominational diversity.

3. Organizational Audit: When I visited the churches, in addition to the interviews, I carefully observed the “culture” of these churches such as bulletin boards, church building, parking lot, Sunday bulletin, other publications, welcoming of the church, and even the programs the churches offer. In some cases, I stayed at the pastor’s or church leaders’ home, which enabled me to know more about that church’s history and atmosphere; which promoting further my data collection.

4. Interviews: As seen in Table 2 (p. 91), I conducted 27 interviews from 6

Korean immigrant churches and 3 mission mobilizers in the United States and Canada through an open-ended dialogue based on research questions (See Appendix B. p. 199). The interviewees were 6 senior pastors, 12 mission pastors/leaders, 4 recent converts after immigration, 5 missionaries sent out from these churches, and 3 mission mobilizers for Korean American/Canadians.

I chose these five groups of people (senior pastor, mission pastors/leaders, new converts, missionaries and mission mobilizers for Korean-American/Canadians) because I wanted to retrieve data from many different parts of the congregation. Of course, their levels of understanding and responding to my questions varied, but I was successful in obtaining the data throughout the congregation.

When needed, I used the means of a telephone and email as well. In the actual interview sessions, I documented important dialogues, observations, ideas, and meanings that required further analysis. I also collected relevant documents from the church, took pictures, and audio-recorded some of the interviews, according to the situation. In the interviews, I did not limit the questions only to those I had prepared. Instead, I used follow-up questions to the participants' initial responses, allowing an open-ended dialogue.

5. Developing and preparing the interview: Before the actual church visitations and interviews, I had had several tests of my questionnaires with some Korean immigrant Christians and pastors in the city of Lexington and Wilmore area. This process revealed that my initial questions were too difficult to understand for the interviewees; therefore, those questions had been repeatedly revised.

For example, a few abstract or professional terms such as "identity" or "marginality" were replaced by other words to describe the same situation indirectly. I

also discovered out that I had too many questions for my open-ended dialogue interview, so I reduced the number of questions and identified the most important questions to use in case of limited time. In fact, this preparation process was very helpful for my actual interview because in many cases, there had not been enough time to hold my interviewees due to their busy schedule. While I needed 90-120 minutes for dealing with the entire questions, some pastors had only 60-90 minutes and one interviewee had only 30 minutes. In those cases, I used some core questions that I had prepared, and it worked out.

Data Analysis and Reflection Method

As mentioned above, I used the grounded theory in general for my data analysis and reflection. This theory allowed me to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in the study. It also enabled me to do a qualitative study through using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998, cited in Creswell 2003:14).

Since there had not been a well-developed and contextualized mission theology for Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada, my research had to begin with the people; how they had understood the Scripture, identity, and mission. From the voice and experience of Korean immigrant Christians, I attained some important themes and from there started my theologizing, expecting to propose a contextualized mission theology. Creswell's generic steps for this grounded theory should be clarified.

Grounded theory has systematic steps (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). These involve generating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding), and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding). Case study and ethnographic research involve a detailed description of the setting

or individuals, followed by analysis of the data from themes or issues (See Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1994). (Creswell 2003:191)

Therefore, I employed six generic steps as Creswell suggests (191-195) for my analysis and interpretation of the data. Later, what I discovered from the interviews and studies was used as a resource for my contextualized reflection.

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
2. Read through all the data to get a general sense of the information.
3. Organize the data with a coding process.
4. Put into categories or themes.
5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented.
6. Make an interpretation or meaning of the data as “what were the lessons learned.”

As explained above, I used open, axial, and selective coding to analyze my data from the interviews. First, I transcribed my notes from the 30 interviewees and read those repeatedly, checking important words or concepts. During open coding, each transcript was analyzed in sentences or groups of sentences reflecting single ideas. Then, I combined these units through axial coding into concepts. After that, in selective coding, I organized the concepts into the central categories: the Scripture, identity, and missions. After these steps, all of the analysis was integrated with other resources such as the Scripture, tradition, social change, social location, and human experience to reflect a contextual theology.

My Role as a Researcher. As Creswell addresses, I needed to identify my biases, values, and personal interests about my research topic and process here (Creswell 2003:183). After graduating from theological university, I had served God through

church ministry for six years in Korea. After immigrating to Canada, I had served a Korean immigrant Church in Canada for another six and a half years. Through that experience, I had become aware of the issues of Korean immigrant Christians. At the same time, I gained some overseas mission experiences as a leader of Korean immigrant church. Needless to say, these experiences had expanded my understanding about immigrant and our missional issues, and I have finally come to believe that Korean immigrant Christians need to explore their missional implication and potential in terms of their immigrant experience.

Moreover, my church and mission experience also enabled me to contact other Korean immigrant churches and missional leaders. For example, I got the list of Korean immigrant churches that focused on mission from my fellow church workers or missional leaders. This was very helpful for my study and interviews about/with other immigrant church pastors and missionaries.

As addressed, my personal experience, my contacts, previously mentioned research planning, and awareness of my situation contributed to this research. However, there has been always the risk of my negative biases and prejudices. For this reason, I had to keep screening my motives and actions as not to be misled. In addition, I had to keep sharing what I discovered with my fellow Korean immigrant missional leaders and getting the feedback to verify its accuracy.

Authorization of Research. I got a letter of authorization from ESJ School of World Mission and Evangelism when I first contacted the church to get the permission for my research. That letter identified who I was, where I was from and what the purpose of my research was. In addition, I used my personal links to contact with other church or missional leaders through/with their recommendation. Some of the

participants had already been familiar to me, but some had not been. Therefore, I needed that authenticity.

Ethical Issues. Even though my research will be done in the setting of the United States and Canada, extreme care should be given since it deals with lots of sensitive issues such as participants' personal experience, crisis, thought, value, leadership, and so on. Therefore, I must care about integrity of both the participants and their churches.

For this reason, I got the permission of the participants to record the interviews, to take pictures, and to use a particular data for the study. Also I used pseudonyms of interviewees if needed when I reported my research. In most cases, I only used the last name of my interviewees except the senior pastor. Moreover, during data collection, I have kept the notes and records in the secure place to avoid leaks of confidential information. Same attention must be given for the publication of research materials. I will not publish anything without the consent of the participants and churches.

Outcomes. Above all, this research stimulates Korean immigrant Christians to see their missional implication and potential. The findings from the field research provide valuable information, showing how Korean immigrant Christians and churches understand the Scripture, identity, and mission in terms of their immigrant experience. Theological insights from the integrated reflection enhance Korean immigrant churches to do missions effectively.

Delimitations

Korean immigrants settled in many other areas of the world, not only North America but also in South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. However, this study focuses on the Korean immigrants who have settled in the United States and

Canada. Especially, the six Korean immigrant churches for my main studies and interviews had been selected because they had given evidence of having experienced church vitality in their mission work around a period of ten years or more.

Definitions of Terms

Many scholars use some of the same terms to describe different or overlapping phenomena. Therefore, the following key terms must be defined for this research:

Korean immigrant Christians, ethnicity, assimilation, marginality, identity transformation, and contextual theology.

Korean Immigrant Christians

According to the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the term “immigrant” refers to “a person who settles as a permanent resident in a different country” (Brown 1993:1315), and the term “*diaspora*” refers to “The dispersion of Jews among the Gentile nations; all those Jews who live outside the biblical land of Israel; (the situation of) anybody of people living outside their traditional homeland” (663).

The term “Korean immigrant Christians” means Korean Christians living outside of Korea. In this research, this term mainly implies Korean Christians who have made a permanent move, regardless of their ages, from Korea to the United States or Canada, and their descendants. These Korean immigrant Christians can be categorized into three groups: the first generation, the 1.5 generation or “transgeneration,” and the second generation. Korean-born immigrants who are Korean-speaking in North America are the first generation. Koreans who have received elementary and secondary education in North America and thus are bilingual and bicultural are considered the 1.5 generation

or transgeneration. The American-born Koreans who are English-speaking are the second generation.

Even though these two terms of “immigrant” and “*diaspora*” similarly imply the people who live outside their own country, the term “*diaspora*” nuances more politic/economic-related motif; therefore, more passive than the term “immigrant.” For this reason, I use the term “Korean immigrants” instead of “Korean *Diaspora*” (except the concluding chapter) since the case of Koreans’ moving into the United States and Canada has been more voluntary than that of Koreans’ moving into China or Central Asia, which had been taken place by force.

In this study, the term of “*diaspora*” has a broader meaning than the term of “immigrant”; the meaning of “*diaspora*” can include the meaning of “immigrant.” For the discussion, therefore, I use the term “Korean immigrants” because in the case of North America, Koreans mainly moved voluntarily. However, when I use the term “Korean *Diaspora*” in Chapter 7, I mean not only “Korean immigrants” who moved to other countries voluntarily, but also Koreans who moved by force. God has used both the Korean “immigrant” and the Korean “*diaspora*.” In that sense, I use the term “Korean *Diaspora*” in Chapter 7 to emphasize God’s missional strategy through not only “Korean immigrants” but also “Korean *Diaspora*.”

Ethnicity

“Ethnicity” is defined as “a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage (customs, language, religion, and so on) passed on from generation to generation” (Casas 1984:787). This is the definition that will be employed in this research.

Assimilation

“Assimilation” means “the process whereby groups with different cultures come to a common or dominant culture” (Gordon 1964:65).

Marginal, Marginality

According to Stonequist, a marginal person “is poised in psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often ‘dominant’ over the other . . . [such a person] emulates and strives to be accepted by a group of which he is not yet, or is only peripherally a member” (Stonequist 1937:8).

In this research, “marginal,” “marginality,” and “marginalization” will be used to signify Korean immigrants’ negative social and psychological situations related to their immigrant experience. Particular determinants affect the intensity and significance of marginality in Korean immigrant community such as race, culture, economic status, politics, and language.

Mission

The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines “mission” as “an act or instance of sending someone or (formerly, *rare*) something, or an instance of being sent, esp. to perform some function or service” (Brown 1993:1793). In this study, “mission” is both the “being” and the “doing” of the people of God, crossing every barrier to proclaim the gospel so that unbelievers will become believers, experiencing reconciliation to God, to others, and to the world. Because of their particular context, Korean immigrant Christians’ mission is usually understood as cross-cultural mission, regardless of whether the same countries (the United States and Canada) or to other countries. However, even though this research mainly deals with Korean immigrant

Christians' cross-cultural mission, "mission" does also include the same-cultural mission. Therefore, when Korean immigrant Christians cross any kind of barriers such as culture, ethnicity, religion, or faith to share the gospel, "mission" is taking place.

Identity Transformation

I use the term, "identity transformation," to describe the fundamental change (both personal and congregational) of Korean immigrant Christians' identity cognitions regarding who they are, what their context is, and what their new life's task is. Through their self-transcending experience due to new biblical perspectives toward their being and doing, all their negative and victimized identity cognitions can be transformed to become positive and creative identity cognitions. Identity could be transformed in other ways, but this research focuses specifically on the transformation of the Christian missional identity, which implies positive attitude and cognition toward immigrant life, immigrant social context, and immigrant life's goal in the relation with mission.

Contextual Theology

Bevans distinguishes between "classical theology" and "contextual theology." "Classical theology" conceives theology as a kind of objective science using the two main sources of Scripture and tradition, the content of which has not and never will be changed, as it is seen as existing above culture and historically conditioned expression. In contrast, "contextual theology" includes context as well such as culture, history, contemporary thought forms as the valid sources of theology, along with Scripture and tradition (Bevans 2004:3-4).

Significance of the Study

For the last century, Korean immigrant Christians have found it difficult to settle down in the United States and Canada, as “strangers from the different Shore” (Takaki 1989). Even though they often formed strong church-centered immigrant communities, and some of their churches have been involved in a dynamic world mission enterprise, the majority of Korean immigrant Christians have struggled with their marginality issue, which has hindered their advancement in mission work. At the same time, Korean immigrant Christians have not articulated their missional potential that might be derived in part from their immigrant experience. Indeed, there has been lack of mission theology, contextualized mission education, and well prepared church leaders in the Korean immigrant community.

Therefore, through this research, I investigated missiological implications of the Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada through gathering data that can be useful in constructing a contextualized mission theology, addressing some important missiological themes related to Korean immigrant Christians. In other words, I tried to focus on the missional identity of Korean immigrant Christians.

Therefore, this research is helpful for Korean immigrant Christians to stimulate a personal and congregational “identity transformation” from marginality to becoming an active instrument of God’s world mission movement (missional identity). At the same time, this research can propose a contextual mission theology that is relevant to the wider Christian community in order that others can be challenged through Korean immigrants’ missional potential and dynamics. Lastly, this research can provide the

theological foundation for Korean immigrant Christians' future mission through which further study or ministry can be developed.

Organization of the Study

Lastly, it must be beneficial to outline the rest of the study to give the reader an idea of the flow of thought through this dissertation. Following Chapter 1, the introductory section of this study, Chapter 2 gives an overview of historical and sociological context of Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada. Histories of Korean *Diaspora* around the world and their sociological issues that have been occurred in their adjustment process will be discussed. Chapter 3 reports my field research, which consists of six Korean immigrant church visitations and more than thirty interviews. Through it, I expect to have several important theological insights to discuss more related the themes of the Scripture, self-identity, and mission. Chapter 4, 5, and 6 discuss these themes emerged from my field research data, intending to enhance a contextualized mission theology. Lastly, Chapter 7 rounds out the dissertation with some conclusion about Korean immigrant church and its mission, legitimate lessons learned from the study, missiological implications, and suggestions for further researches.

Chapter 2

The Context of Korean Immigrants / Historical and Sociological Study

In this chapter, the history, religion, and society of Korean immigrant are introduced as the general context of this study.

History of Korean *Diaspora* around the World

While Korean legend holds that the country was founded in 2333 B.C. by a mythical character, Tangun, recorded history indicates that Korea had four native dynasties for about two thousand years: the Three Kingdoms (57 B.C. - 668 A.D.), the Silla (668-935), the Koryo (935-1392), and the Yi (1392-1910). Then, Korea was under Japanese oppression for thirty-six years (1910-1945). After experiencing national independence from Japan, the Korean War (1950-1953) broke out and Korea was divided into two by the Allied Powers: the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic (North Korea).

Historically, Koreans had rarely left their small and limited territory during its more than five thousand year history. In fact, William Griffis, an American missionary, called Korea "the hermit nation" (1888). However, this situation dramatically changed in the 19th Century with the importation of the gospel and political pressure of Japan. In 1910, Japan annexed Korea and began a rule that lasted for the next thirty-six years.

Significantly, during the thirty-six years of Japanese rule (1910-1945), one fourth of the Korean population (five million out of twenty million Koreans) left the country. Thousands of Koreans escaped to China and Russia for freedom from Japanese oppression and to carry out an independence movement against Japanese rule. Some of these people had been forced to move to Central Asia by the Russian government in

1937. Later, the Korean War (1950-1953) contributed to more Koreans leaving the country. Some time after, legislation passed by the Congress of the United States (1965) accelerated Koreans' immigration to North America. Many also immigrated to South America for farming, to Europe for mining and nursing, and to other countries to invest their wealth or to study abroad (Jaewhan Lee 1955:146). Following is a brief historical description of the Korean *Diaspora* around the world.

Korean *Diaspora* in Japan

By the time Japan finally annexed Korea in 1910, Korea had already lost its independence through the relentless extension of what was regarded as “progressive” Japanese control (Lee and De Vos 1981:ix). In July of 1912, a great number of Korean farmers lost their land because of a deceitful policy of land exploitation. Even worse, an acute economical depression affected Korea. Since they had no means of livelihood, many farmers and laborers left Korea and went to Japan for survival. Afterwards, the number of Korean people in Japan rapidly increased. Therefore, Jaewhan Lee says, “compare the figures from 1921, where there were 35,876 Koreans in Japan, to the ones in 1930 when the number increased to approximately 300,000” (1995:135). Even though many of them returned home after Korea's independence in 1945, some chose to stay in Japan.

From the beginning, Koreans in Japan have experienced legal discrimination unless they accepted their status as members of the Japanese empire. There have been lots of complicated issues regarding discrimination against those with ascribed alien status, regardless of their length of residence in Japan. “In effect, there is still no significant distinction in present Japanese legal thought between ethnicity and citizenship. Naturally these groups of immigrants gathered around the church which

served as a locus of finding cultural identity” (134). In 2007, Korean residents in Japan numbered 893,740 (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2008).

Korean *Diaspora* in China

About the time of Japanese annexation in 1910, Koreans were generally very poor, and the lives of Korean farmers were especially severe. While not many Koreans lived in China before Japanese oppression, there was a great emigration of Koreans to China around that time, especially into Manchuria. The reasons for this move were both political and economic problems that stemmed from Japanese oppression. Almost all who moved there did not want to live under Japanese rule, and many of them actually carried out an organized independence movement against the Japanese government.

In Manchuria, there were almost virgin farming lands with good crops. Between 1910 and 1920, Koreans who moved into China totaled 192,540, and in 1920, the number rose to 459,400 Koreans (Jung 2000:354). Today, the Overseas Korean Foundation (2007) gives the official number of Koreans who live in China as 2,762,160.

Korean *Diaspora* in Russia

From 1860, Koreans began to cross their northeastern border and move into Russia because of the severe famine and the misrule of the Yi dynasty. Similar to the case of China, after the Japanese annexation in 1910, many Koreans escaped their homeland for a national independence movement. In fact, Koreans from the northern part passed over the Du-man River, and others from the southern part arrived at Vladivostok by ship. There Koreans lived as pioneers, cultivating the wild land under the tacit approval of Russian government (Jung 2003:171).

Meanwhile, one hundred thousand Koreans had been forced to work by Japan in

the area of Sakhalin Island between 1930s and 1940s, and forty three thousand Koreans could not come back home even after World War II and their national independence because of making an armed entry of the Soviet Union into that area (173). It has been known that even though there were poor living situations, Koreans who had inherited diligence, remarkable farming skill, and experience of rice growing were welcomed by the Russian government that sought the colonization of the Far Eastern and tried to reclaim waste land (172).

In 1937, the Russian government deported sixteen to eighteen thousand Koreans to Central Asia such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The Stalin government wanted to cultivate the barren fields of Central Asia, and Korean people were chosen because of their diligence and excellent farming skill (173). There were many tragic family stories from this era. These Koreans and their descendants had not been recognized by the Korean government for fifty years. Nevertheless, they have survived and tried to seek their identity in their multi-ethnic society of Russia, which consists of more than one hundred ethnic groups. Today approximately 533,973 Korean residents and their descendents live in Russian territory (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2008).

Korean *Diaspora* in Brazil

The first Korean immigrants to Brazil were twelve fourth-generation Koreans to Japan who moved to Brazil along with another 120 Japanese people in 1918. Afterwards, fifty North Korean prisoners of the Korean War chose to move to Brazil and settled down (Jaewhan Lee 1995:138). In 1961, the agricultural immigration policy of Brazil began, and the government of South Korea promoted it; therefore, 17 families totaling 103 Koreans moved to Brazil, arriving on February 12, 1963 (Jung 2000:129).

In the 1970s, the number of Korean immigrants in Brazil steadily increased; however, many of them had not settled down in the plantations where they originally intended to settle because of the harsh condition. Instead, they achieved rapid economic growth through opening up markets in the cities.

Whong addresses three essential factors that reinforced the Korean desire to move to Brazil: the struggle to escape from the national crisis after the Korean War, the economic reason to pursue prosperity on the broader world stage, and the dream to provide a better education for their children (Whong 1983:25). However, this dream had not been achieved well because Brazilian social, economic, and educational situations were far below their initial expectations; therefore, many of them later chose to move again to North America.

Today, the number of Koreans in Brazil is not exactly known due to their situational uniqueness and difficulty in calculating the population of Koreans. According to Yong Shik Kim's thesis (1995), there were about 45,000 Koreans in Brazil, but today's Korean Association in Brazil counts it as around 50,000 (*Korean Net* 2008).

Korean Diaspora in Other Countries

After Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel by the world power, which was represented by both American troops and Soviet troops. Throughout this period of Allied occupation and the Korean War (1950-1953), South and North Korea had been badly damaged. In terms of Korean *Diaspora* after this period of time, a very small number of North Koreans left the country. Instead, Koreans who spread around the world have mainly come from the South Korea.

Until 1963, South Korea's economic recovery had not made any significant

progress in economic reconstruction because of the shortage of funds, scientists, technicians, and skilled workers, in addition to shortages of electricity and raw materials (Nahm 1988:482). “To overcome this situation, Korean people began to explore other means to further the nation’s recovery and expansion. At that time, West Germany was in need of miners, and Norway needed hospital nurses. In responding to these opportunities for employment abroad, many Koreans migrated to Europe” (Jaewhan Lee 1995:146).

Region	Country	2001	2003	2005	2007
Asia		2,670,723	3,239,904	3,590,411	4,040,376
	Japan	640,234	898,714	901,284	893,740
	China	1,887,558	2,144,789	2,439,395	2,762,160
	Others	142,931	196,401	249,732	384,476
America		2,375,525	2,433,262	2,392,828	2,341,163
	United States	2,123,167	2,157,498	2,087,496	2,016,911
	Canada	140,896	170,121	198,170	216,628
	Central and South America	111,462	105,643	107,162	107,624
Europe		595,073	652,131	640,276	645,252
	CIS	521,694	557,732	532,697	533,976
	Europe	73,379	94,399	107,579	111,276
Middle East		7,208	6,559	6,923	9,440
Africa		5,280	5,095	7,900	8,485
Total		5,653,800	6,336,951	6,638,338	7,044,716

Table 1: The Statistics of Overseas Koreans

(Source: 재외동포재단 (Overseas Koreans Foundation) 2007)

Available on http://www.korean.net/morgue/status_1.jsp?tCode=status&dCode=0101

Even after 1963 when Korea had finally begun experiencing its high level of economic growth through “the miracle of Han River,” Korea’s immigration to other countries has continued. For example, with the economy as their reason, many Koreans immigrated to several areas within Southeast Asia, and at the same time other Koreans

moved to Asia, North and South America, Europe, Middle East, and even Africa for their political, economic, and educational advancement. Table 1 (p.45) shows the statistics of Korean Diaspora around the world today.

At present, there are more than seven million Koreans who live outside Korea around the world. This numbers almost ten percent of all the Korean population (both South and North Korea), and if we remember that this number is just for an official report, we can imagine that there may be more Koreans who now live in 180 countries than we are able to count as presented in Table 1. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Koreans are one of the most “widely dispersed” people groups in the 21st Century. Missionaries who were interviewed for this research agreed that there is almost no place in the world where Koreans cannot be found today. Truly, there has been a rapid Korean *Diaspora* during last century all around the world.

History of Korean Immigrants in the United States and Canada

Through his book, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (1989), a third generation Japanese-American sociologist, Ronald Takaki, declares an inner voice of an Asian-American regarding “invisible American history” within the United States. Although his book covers all of the histories of Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and Indians in the United States, his answering of the question, “What is it to be American?” is particularly very relevant for the Korean immigrant community.

What we should consider seriously is that both pre-arrived Americans and Asian-Americans share a mistaken view that American only means White or European in origin. However, Takaki refuses this view and insists, “Indeed, the story of Asian Americans is woven into the history of America itself” (Takaki 1989:xii). He is right. In

fact, the United States and Canada has been formed through immigration; therefore, each history of immigrations should be considered seriously. Since this study mainly focuses on Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada, let us briefly trace here the history of Korean immigrants in these countries.

Korean Immigrants in the United States

The on-line report of Racial Ethnic Ministry (2002), submitted by the Office of Korean Congregational Enhancement, National Mission Division of the Presbyterian Church (USA), addresses that there have been three major periods of Korean immigration to the United States. The first wave of Korean immigration (1903-1944) started with Korean laborers on Hawaiian sugar plantations. The report shows that 7,726 Korean immigrant workers came to Hawaii between 1903 and 1905. The second major wave was from 1945 to 1964. During this period, two historic events opened the way for many Korean immigrants to come to the United States. The first was Korea's liberation from Japanese colonization in 1945, and the second was the Korean War during 1950-1953. Following the liberation and after the Korean War, many Korean students and women who married American soldiers came to the United States. The third and major wave of Korean immigrants began in 1965 and continues to the present.

Compared to the previous waves that had been related to political, economical, and social reasons, this later wave of Korean immigration has been to seek the "American Dream." This has been a time of very rapid growth because, in 1965, Congress amended the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law to eliminate the former quota system of racial and national preference. Regarding these newest Korean immigrants, most come from urban middle-class backgrounds, and therefore, many of them are highly educated professionals, and they have usually settled in major

metropolitan areas in the United States, such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta, Dallas, and so on. Because of this huge wave of newer immigration, while the 1970 Census found that only about 70,000 Koreans lived in the United States, the Table 1 (p. 45) shows us that today's Korean population approaches 2,016,911.

Korean Immigrants in Canada

Canada is a culturally diverse country in terms of varieties of languages, religions and lifestyles. Canada encourages its various ethnic groups to maintain their cultural heritage, and join together for common national goals. This unique position is known as the "Canadian Mosaic" (Gibbon 1938).

Compared to the United States, Korean immigration to Canada is relatively recent and began primarily through seminary students studying abroad. They were connected with Canadian missionaries in Korea, and naturally felt some affinity with the country. For example, the first Korean student who arrived at Canada was Il-Whan Kim in 1896 through a missionary's help. After finishing his theological study, Kim went back to Korea and served as the president of Martha Wilson Bible School in Wonsan. Later, he was martyred by the communists (Jung 2000:98).

Meanwhile, the first known Korean settler in Canada was Hee-Nyum Cho, who moved to Canada in 1915. The major immigrant door for Canada was opened in 1966 (Jung 2000:98). Until the mid-1960s, Koreans who settled in Canada were mainly pastors, physicians, and scholars. The first Korean community in Toronto began to be established with the liberalization of Canadian immigration regulations in the mid-1960s (J.G. Kim, 1983, cited in Uichol Kim 1990:200). *The Korean Times Daily* reports that the Korean population in Canada was less than seventy in 1965; however, this has

steadily and rapidly grown. In 2003 there are about one hundred and fifty thousand Koreans in Canada (*The Korean Times Daily* 2005). Due to continued Korean immigration, today the number is estimated to be 216,628 (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2008).

Korean Immigrant Society in the United States and Canada

Understanding Korean immigrant society in the United States and Canada requires an examination of Korean immigrants' religious background and their inner and outer social issues. The Korean immigrant church, the most important organization in their community, must also be understood.

Korean Immigrants and Their Religion

To understand Korean immigrants' religious background, we must first note the dominant religions in Korean history. In 1999, slightly more than half of the total Korean population indicated that they were religious believers (Korean National Statistical Office 1999). Specifically, religious affiliations in 1999 were as follows: Buddhism, 26.3%; Protestantism, 18.6%; Catholicism, 7.0%. Thus these three religions made up 51.9% of Korean population and therefore, are the representative religions of Korea in terms of number. No one religion makes up more than half of the population, nor constitutes half of the total number of religious believers. For this reason, Korea can be called as a multi-religious nation.

Religions and Traditional Beliefs of Korean People. However, this distribution does not show the traditional religious situation of Korea. There has been a dramatic change during the last few decades with the advancement of Christianity. Historically, Korean people have always contextualized new religions in some degree when they

first come in contact with them. Four important religions and traditional beliefs need to be addressed: Shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity.

1. Shamanism. Shamanism is the oldest belief system in Korea. “Shamanism is a generic term that refers to the beliefs and rituals associated with spirit-mediators (shamans) who practice healing and divination. Shamanism is found in many parts of the world in various forms, but it has been most pervasively practiced as ‘folk religion’ for several millennia by the peoples of North Asia, extending from the Arctic regions of Siberia down to Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan,” noted Won Moo Hurh (Hurh 1998:17).

Although shamanism has consistently survived in the history of Korea through *mudang* (female practitioners) and *paksu* (male practitioners), the social status of *mudang/paksu* and their descendants was low. During the Yi dynasty, Confucianism was the elite religion and shamanism was considered as a primitive set of beliefs of the lower classes (17). Nevertheless, shamanism has been integrated in Koreans’ life with other beliefs, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and later even Christianity.

There had not been a formally developed doctrine or religious institution for shamanism, making it impossible to count the exact number of believers in Korea who practiced shamanism. However, shamanism continues to flow into the contemporary Korean society in various forms and influences. Actually, shamanism has been an indispensable part of Korean culture and has also affected some of the Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada even today.

2. Confucianism. The second important religion in Korea is Confucianism. It is not a religion in the strict sense since there is no concept of god or a supernatural being. However, it has constantly laid down Korean social ethics and moral principles for

maintaining harmonious relationships with family members and with the state (Hurh 1998:15). Historically, “Confucianism entered Korea in the early period of the Three Kingdoms (57 B.C. – A. D. 688), and its values and ethics eventually became the core of the Korean national character, particularly during the Yi dynasty (1392-1910)” (16). Again, even though Confucianism has no conception of god or a supernatural being, it has taken the role of a religion in the Korean society. Hurh explains this aspect in detail:

Without any conception of “god” or theology, Confucianism has thus functioned almost like a religion in Korea for dictating morals, ethics, social order, and even spiritual devotion, such as ancestor worship. In this sense, every Korean may be considered a Confucian in terms of social values and ethical norms, but not in terms of “religious faith.” However, some Koreans claim Confucianism as their “religion” mainly because of the ancestor worship incorporated in the Confucian teaching as an essential part of filial piety. This ancestor worship generally involves rituals and ceremonies to honor deceased parents and ancestors but lacks a systematic theology of life, death, and afterlife. (Hurh 1998:16)

Therefore, Confucianism has been in conflict with Christianity ever since protestant missionaries entered Korea because of this matter of ancestor worship. Especially in rural areas, Confucianism is an obstacle for Christian evangelism. Although many people do not admit that Confucianism is their religion, its norm has clearly been evident in Korean people’s life, even to the Korean immigrant Christians in the United States and Canada.

3. Buddhism. Buddhism entered Korea through missionary monks from India in A.D. 372 (Hurh 1998:18) and has existed as a religion as well as a philosophy in Korean culture. “Buddhism in its original form was an ascetic religion without the conception of a god or an eternal deity. Its founder, Buddha (literally meaning “the Enlightened One”), had little interest in theology but sought to attain Nirvana, the perfect state of bliss in which all worldly desires, passions, and sufferings, including

the endless cycle of rebirth (transmigration of the soul), are extinct” (18). Clark notes the essential teachings of Buddha’s idea in the Four Noble Truths: all life is suffering, suffering is due to desire, the way to release suffering is by eliminating desire, and desire can be eliminated (Clark 1961:86-87).

Once Buddhism was introduced into Korea in the 4th century A.D., it rapidly spread through the three Kingdoms of Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla. Then, it was passed on to Japan before the sixth century. “The golden age of Korean Buddhism began around the sixth century and reached its zenith during the period of the succeeding dynasty, the Koryo Kingdom (918-1392)” (Hurh 1998:20). With the fall of the Koryo Kingdom and the rise of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), Confucianism gradually took the place of the state religion; however, Buddhism still influences Korean people’s daily lives. Today, Buddhism has the largest following of all Korea’s religions. As of 1999, there are more than 10 million followers of Buddhism in Korea (Korea National Statistical Office 1999).

4. Christianity. The most rapidly growing religion in Korea today is Christianity. Korea was known as the “Hermit Kingdom” because of her persistent resistance against Western countries for a long time. However, since the 19th century, Korean people have passionately responded to Christianity, making it the fastest growing religion in Korea.

It has been suggested that Nestorianism was the first form of Christianity to be introduced to Korea, near the end of the 7th century (Yang-sun Kim 1971:27-29). “The Nestorian sect, *Kyungkyo*, persecuted in the West, fled to Persia. From there it sent twenty-one missionaries led by Alopen to China in 635 A.D., which was then in close relationship with the Silla Dynasty” (John T. Kim 1996:85). In recent years Nestorian stone crosses have been discovered in the territory of the Silla Dynasty, indicating that

Nestorianism was transmitted to Silla (85). Besides, Min's discoveries regarding this theory, such as books and monument stones in both Korea and China (Min 1988:31-35), add credibility.

Another instance of Christianity in early Korea can be found in 1592 when Japan invaded Korea. Konishi Yukinaga, a general of the Japanese army, and some of his soldiers were Catholics. While Yukinaga was in Korea, he stayed with a Portuguese Jesuit missionary named Gregorio de Cespedes, and a Japanese priest named Foucan Eion. They functioned like army chaplains. Although they could not reach out to the indigenous Korean people, many Korean prisoners became Catholic believers after being taken to Japan (Hurh 1998:20; Clark 1961:225-226).

Christianity drew stronger attention in Korea following the introduction of the book in Chinese, titled *The Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven (Chonju-silui)*, written by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). In that book, Ricci told "how God created the Heavens and the earth and how he governs them in peace and how the immortality of the soul of man makes him different from the birds and beasts. He also reasons that man's nature is innately good; therefore, he must respect and serve God" (Yi 1970:36, cited in John T. Kim:1996:87). Ricci also discussed the new "Western Learning." Naturally, some Koreans became interested in Western learning and religion; as a result, several Confucian scholars and their families became Catholic believers. However, persecution followed and continued until 1876, when finally the Yi dynasty decided to open its door to the West, meaning that the Korean people were free to accept the Catholic faith (Hurh 1980:21).

Jan Janse Weltevree, a Dutch sailor who was shipwrecked on Cheju Island in 1627, first introduced Protestantism to Korea. Although his intent was not to become a

missionary, he became the first bearer of the Protestant faith to Korea. Later, in 1832, Carl Gutzlaff became the first Protestant missionary to Korea. Gutzlaff was a German working for a Dutch missionary society, and stayed in Korea for forty days to evangelize. However, the Christian propagation was slow and severe persecution followed. In fact, Robert Jermain Thomas of the Church of England became Korea's first Protestant martyr in 1866 (Hurh 1980:22).

In 1883, a very significant event took place: Sang Yoon Suh, a Christian colporteur, left Manchuria with many copies of the Bible. Thus the New Testament began to circulate throughout Korea before Protestant missionaries arrived. Some believers began churches and waited for missionaries' arrival before being baptized. (John T. Kim:1996:94).

Protestantism was officially introduced to Korea after the agreement of the American-Korean Treaty in 1882. After its approval, a Presbyterian medical missionary named Horace Newton Allen arrived in 1884 from the United States and founded Korea's first modern and Western-style hospital, Severance Hospital in Seoul. He was a critical figure for Korean immigrant history because he was the person who persuaded the Korean king, Kojong, to send Koreans to sugar plantations in Hawaii. These workers became the first Korean immigrants in the West (Hurh 1980:22).

In 1884, three other American missionary pioneers entered Korea, Henry and Ella Appenzeller (Methodist) and Horace G. Underwood (Presbyterian). Hurh notes, "They are noted for their contributions to the modernization of Korea as well as the propagation of the Christian faith. One of their most significant contributions was in the area of education. They founded many Western-style schools that provided students with professional and vocational education" (23), and many young people from these

schools eventually became leaders of Korea. Under Japanese occupation, these “Protestant missionaries continued to support the Korean independence movement until they were deported by Japanese government in 1940” (23-24).

In spite of the Japanese persecution during World War II, Christianity survived in Korea, and after national independence, Protestant churches experienced phenomenal growth. In 1995, 18.6% of the Korean population was affiliated with Protestant churches, and 7% were affiliated with Catholic churches (Korea National Statistical Office 1999). In fact, no other country in Asia except the Philippines has such a high proportion of Christians. Moreover, the percentage of Christians among Korean immigrants to the United States and Canada is even higher, with about 70% (Warner 2001:30). Surely, the Christian faith has been the most important religious influence among Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada.

Meanwhile, Young Dong Kim, a Missiology professor of Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Korea, gives this glowing profile of the Korean church: Bible-centered church, growing (dynamic) church, enthusiastic/passionate faith, spirituality of suffering and weakness, self-reliant church, transformational power in the world (Young Dong Kim 2005:3-13).

Religions of Korean Immigrants in the United States and Canada. In terms of religious patterns of Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada, Warner’s observation is worthy to consider. A professor of sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Warner points out that not only Koreans but also other immigrant groups, regardless of religion, whether Christianity or Muslim, become more actively religious in their new country (Warner 2001:27). Why? He argues that it is because there is a close relationship between being more religious and maintaining people’s self-identity.

Warner cites Williams, “In the United States, religion is the social category with clearest meaning and acceptance in the host society, so the emphasis on religious affiliation and identity is one of the strategies that allow the immigrant to maintain self-identity while simultaneously acquiring community acceptance” (Williams 1988:11, cited in Warner 2001:27).

In addition, Hurh and Kim argue that religion can even serve as a means by which immigrants can simultaneously maintain their ethnic identity and enjoy the fruits of Americanization (Hurh and Kim 1998, cited in Warner 2001:28). They insist, “Their marginal occupations, limited social networks, and related socio-psychological problems are factors that push them to seek meaning in their lives through religion” (Hurh and Kim 1990, cited in Kwon et al. 2001:13). This seems to be reasonable. In fact, many new immigrants have had new faith in their new context and even become more devoted. This is a common phenomenon in the Korea immigrant community.

Korean immigrants in the U.S. generally manifest several identifiable religious characteristics. Warner gives nine religiously important characteristics of Korean immigrants in the U.S., which may be summarized as follows:

1. 70 percent of U.S. Koreans are church members. Even though we have already considered that the majority of earlier Korean immigrants were Christians and had the connection with missionaries, this percentage is still extraordinarily high.
2. Christian Korean immigrants are highly educated, although their educational credentials may not be accepted in the United States.
3. Koreans enjoy relative affluence and have more resources to build their own institutions.
4. Korean immigrant churches are internally socially inclusive; Korean

Americans are, as a group, ethnically homogeneous, speaking the same language and sharing many of the same traditions.

5. Koreans in the United States are largely a first-generation group.

6. People who join the church after immigration are less likely to be regular participants than those who brought their Christian affiliation with them.

7. Although most of the U.S. Korean churches are small, a number of them, both here and in Korea, are astoundingly large.

8. While most immigrants speak Korean at home, particularly with their spouses, over three-fourths use English exclusively or often in the workplace. Here, Korean pastors mainly use Korean. It means that the church provides a special refuge for the use of the Korean language.

9. While some other religious groups - Greek Orthodox, Japanese-Canadian Buddhists, Roman Catholics in general, and Hispanics in particular - have suffered a shortage of available clergy leadership, this is not true for Korean Americans, who seem to enjoy a surplus of pastor candidates. Unfortunately, one result may be the propensity for schism in Korean immigrant churches, their consequent small average size (30-33).

Regarding Korean Buddhism in America, three distinct paths can be identified by which Korean Buddhism became integrated in the American context: the work of individual Zen teachers, the activities of temples located in cities where Koreans are concentrated, and the studies by scholars specializing in Korean Buddhism (Yu 2001:224). Through these means, Korean Buddhism has been slowly but firmly rooting itself in American soil. I personally have witnessed the same progress take place in both Canadian and American context.

Today, “the central message of Buddhism imbedded in Korean thought and culture – harmony, nonaggression, compassion, and benevolence to all beings – is gradually being transplanted to this new land” (Yu 2001:224). Yu also lists some problems and challenges that the Korean Buddhist body in America faces:

1. The creation of an effective organizational structure that can plan, coordinate, regulate, and improve Buddhist programs and activities.
2. The development of a legitimate credential system for monks and lay leaders.
3. The need to provide monks the opportunity to adjust to the new situation in America.
4. The level of commitment of some monks working in the new context.
5. The need to reach and train the next generation Koreans, and the financial difficulties (222-226).

Other Materials for Further Study of Korean Immigrants and their Religions.

The following information is useful for understanding this topic more deeply. Jung Han Kim’s article, “Christianity and Korean Culture: The Reasons for the Success of Christianity in Korean” (2004), presents a short survey of the development of Protestantism in Korean, enabling one us to understand the “Koreanized Christianity” that Korean immigrants have brought into the United States and Canada.

In his article, Jung Han Kim shows how the Shamanistic beliefs and Confucianism have impacted Korean Christianity. He also insists that the political attitude of the Protestants in the resistance against the Japanese colonizers played an important role in characterizing Korean Christianity. Understanding these characteristics is crucial because they are closely related to understanding Korean immigrant Christians’ belief pattern and their search for present prosperity, vertical

leadership style, and patriotic attitude.

Pil Won Min's Th.M. thesis, "Shamanism as a Religion and Culture: A Study of the Relationship between Shamanism and Revival Movements in Korean Church Growth" (2004) shows how Shamanism has influenced Korean churches, and especially revival movements in Korean Church Growth.

While the earlier immigrants in North America came mainly from Europe and thus from a Christian background, the transpacific migration of Asians with many other religions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to religious diversity in the United States. For this reason, Min and Kim's book, *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities* (2002), is valuable as it clearly illustrates how the later Asian immigrants' major "Oriental religions" and "Asianized Christianity" differ from the earlier European immigrants' Judeo-Christian religions. Min points out that despite such influence or influx of Asian religion, there has been very little research regarding this phenomenon.

Throughout the book, Min and Kim systematically provide comprehensive information about the religious experiences of six major Asian immigrant groups, employing ethnographic research method. The first chapter of the book is especially important because it presents some major themes of Asian immigrants' religious experience such as ethnicity, social service, race, gender, and trans-nationalism. Since this review provides answers to myriads of questions regarding the research about Asian American's religious experience as well as some valuable bibliographical information, it is an invaluable resource to anyone interested in this area of study.

Regarding Korean immigrants' religious experience, Ho-Youn Kwon's *Korean Americans and Their Religion* (Kwon, et al.:2001), is a key source. A collection of

articles from a symposium on Korean-American religion and society sponsored by North Park University in Chicago in 1996, this book examines Korean-American religious life and views the immigrant church as central in Korean-American experience. This volume also includes some Buddhist materials, noting that Korean Buddhists have been missionaries to America.

As mentioned earlier, this book focuses on the issue of identity melded from Korean, American, and Christian legacies into a new form. Stephen Warner, a sociology professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, points out that both Koreans and other immigrants have had a common religious experience. The fact is, “Immigrants are religious.” Not only Christians but also Muslims become more actively religious in the United State than they were at home (Warner 2001:27). He explains the reason as that there is a close relationship between being more religious and maintaining self-identity. Surely there is a close relationship between religion and ethnic/marginal identity, and this is a common phenomenon among immigrant groups. Another value of this book is that it includes many kinds of conference data about the second generation Korean immigrants regarding their identity crisis, church structure, leadership practice, and others.

Korean Immigrants and Western Society

When Korean immigrants encountered the totally new context of Western society, many kinds of difficulties awaited them, such as problems with assimilation/acculturation, cultural conflicts, relational difficulties, and identity crisis. Among them, we need to look at the issue of assimilation and acculturation first because many other problems may also be related or has originated from this issue.

Assimilation. In the previous chapter (p. 36), “assimilation” is defined as the process whereby groups with different cultures come to a common or dominant culture. In history, both the United States and Canada have formed their nations through immigration, which implies that immigrants from different parts of the world have made up the American and Canadian people, culture, and communities. Naturally, they have faced many kinds of problems in their histories arising from differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and national background. These differences have resulted in different theories of assimilation.

1. Three Assimilation Theories. Milton M. Gordon suggests three theories of assimilation that illuminate the assimilation process of immigrants in the United States and Canada: Anglo-conformation, melting-pot, and pluralism (Gordon 1964:84-159).

First, the Anglo-conformation theory implies the complete renunciation of the immigrant’s original culture to the Anglo-American (host) culture (85). When immigrants stay a long time and receive thorough education, they become more like the host culture. In the end, the culture remaining is only the Anglo-American (host) culture, and the culture of the immigrants does not affect the host culture. This theory contributes to understanding the assimilation of many immigrants from Europe, but it fails to explain the assimilation of most immigrants from non-European countries.

Second, the melting-pot theory argues that both the host culture and the immigrant culture influence each other; the result is a new culture which combines elements of the two. As plausible as this may sound, this theory does not explain the degree of influence that each culture has. This melting-pot theory is less applicable to assimilation patterns of small ethnic minorities.

Third, Pluralism. In the history of immigration, scholars have noted the significant differences of ethnicity and culture, and also observed the existence of discrimination and tension among different ethnic groups. This has given rise to the pluralism theory. “When these distinctive ethnic identities are nurtured, a pluralistic society forms. The pluralists do not deny some assimilation into primary group occurs. Rather, they argue that the ethnicity remains a powerful and important force among different ethnic groups” (Jason Hyungkyun Kim 1999:16).

2. Assimilation Pattern of Korean Immigrants. Min describes the uniqueness of Korean immigrants’ assimilation pattern in the United States and Canada by such words as “adhesive,” characterized by both “high level of ethnic attachment” and “low level of assimilation” (1995:214-218). For Korean immigrants, certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society influence their traditional culture and social networks, yet without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old.

In fact, most Korean immigrants have maintained their persistent attachment to Korean culture and social ties, regardless of the length of residence in the United States or Canada. For example, they normally use the Korean language among their families, are exposed to Korean mass media, eat Korean food for dinner everyday, uphold Korean traditional values, and maintain close social ties with members of their ethnic group. These include kin, Korean friends, Korean neighbors, Korean churches, and other Korean ethnic organizations. In other words, Korean immigrants tend to keep a high level of ethnic attachment in their assimilation process.

Of course, other ethnic communities have also kept their ethnic attachments. However, the level of attachment in Korean immigrants is relatively high compared to

other ethnic groups. For example, Hurh and Kim (1988) report that 90% of Korean immigrants in Chicago speak mainly the Korean language at home and that 82% joined to one or more Korean ethnic organizations. A comparative study of three Asian ethnic groups also indicates that 75% of Korean Americans have affiliated with one or more Korean related associations. It is a much larger proportion than Filipino Americans' (50%) or Chinese Americans' (19%) (Mangiafico 1988:174).

Min's discussion of the reasons of this high level of ethnic attachment sounds fair.

He lists three major reasons for this phenomenon:

First, South Korea is a small and culturally homogeneous country, with only one racial group speaking one language. By contrast, Chinese, Indian, and Filipino immigrants include several language groups. Having one native language gives Koreans enormous advantages for maintaining Korean ethnic attachment Second, Korean immigrants maintain strong ethnic attachment partly because most of them are affiliated with Korean ethnic churches Third, Korean immigrants' concentration in small businesses also strengthens Korean ethnicity ... most Korean immigrants are segregated in the ethnic economy, either as small business owners or as employees of stores owned by co-ethnics. (214-215)

Surely their cultural homogeneity, high affiliation with Korean ethnic churches, and concentration in small family businesses has influenced their strong ethnic attachment and solidarity.

At the same time, Korean immigrants' assimilation pattern can also be described as a low level of assimilation into Western society. Of course, they have tried to adjust to their new context as their length of residence has increased, such as learning and using English, exposure to American/Canadian mass media, selective adoption of American/Canadian cultural values, eating American/Canadian breakfast and lunch on weekdays, developing friendships with Americans or Canadians, and limited participation in Western organizations. However, Korean immigrants' level of

assimilation is generally still low compared to other immigrant ethnic groups. This does not mean that there has never been a high level of assimilation for Korean immigrants or that all Korean immigrants enjoy their strong ethnic solidarity within their boundaries. The following discussion gives a fine example of Koreans' responses to Western culture.

An Example of Korean Immigrant Acculturation. "The term, 'acculturation,' has been widely accepted among anthropologists as referring to those changes set in motion by the coming together of societies with different cultural traditions," notes Won H. Chang (Chang 1977:136). Through his Biacculturation model, shown in Figure 2 (p. 20), Chang attempts to describe the acculturation pattern of Korean immigrants. Even though his study only focuses on "family value" as his barometer for his research, not including other aspects of Korean values and culture, it still provides a general picture of Korean immigrants' acculturation patterns in Western society. In his model, group A with culture X and group B with culture Y imply two groups and cultures which Korean immigrants in the United States or Canada would fall into when they emigrate. He explains:

Each individual from groups A and B would belong somewhere on the line XY as a consequence of the contact situation. For example, if a person from group B moves toward the Y end, he is interpreted as resisting change (nativistic movement). If he moves in the direction of X, he accepts change (cultural assimilation movement). However, there is no clear border between X and Y. A person who belongs in the central area would be part of bicultural movements. (136-137)

After his research regarding how Korean family values have been changed in the acculturation process, Chang reports his analysis in three types of patterns: nativistic movement type (resistance to change), cultural assimilation type (acceptance of change), and bicultural movement type (formation of new culture). He explains, "The

nativistic movement type emphasizes the heritage of the traditional Korean family, building strong boundaries between the family and society in order to keep the family system relatively close-knit" (145).

For them, the value of family is greater than the value of the individual. A wife's obedience and respect to her husband is one of the most important conditions for a happy family life. The act of divorce is a disgrace to the family. Elderly parents are the center of authority. Relatives are an extension of the immediate family unit. Therefore, people in this group express anxiety and fear toward American values. They feel insecure among Americans and emphasize the heritage of the traditional Korean family (145-148). It is the typical characteristic of the first immigrant generation.

"Contrary to the nativistic type," Chang writes, "the cultural assimilation type is characterized by social activity. For this group, the family boundary is wider than it is for the nativistic type, and there is no strong indication of how this type feels about the relationship between husband and wife, or interaction with neighbors" (148). These people are strongly opposed to living with their aged parents. For them, parents should not influence their children's future based on the desires of the parents. They feel comfortable with their occupational environment and believe that they have an equal opportunity to be as successful in the occupational world as the Caucasian-American.

For this reason, this group feels more capable of the give-and-take attitude of American society. This type is characterized by broader social activity and engagement, and the family is just a part of a wider society. In other words, the authoritarian values of the Korean society such as the absolute authority of parents, the seniority system, and absolute hierarchical structures, are rejected (148-149). This kind of mentality is typical of the second-generation immigrant.

Thirdly, the bicultural movement type is a combination of these two types, through closer to the nativistic type. This group acknowledges the authority of the family, and the great difficulty of achieving recognition in America. At the same time, they enjoy their life in America, but believe their friendships with Americans are not easily made. They retain many Korean life values; however, they are somewhat motivated toward the American life-style. In other words, they are standing in the middle between two extreme types. They do not believe that they have an equal opportunity to be as successful in the occupational world as the Caucasian-American. Since people in this group are located somewhere between the two previous groups, the direction of this group seems ambivalent. They do not seem so anxious about American society as to retreat entirely into the Korean-oriented family structure (149-153). This attitude has existed in the life of the 1.5 generation and some of the 1st and 2nd generations, depending on the rate of their acculturation or assimilation.

In summary, “Nativistic movement” maintains the importance of family relations, “Cultural assimilation” focuses on social participation, and “Bicultural movement” is a compromising or mediating group. Indeed, family values or communal values are one of the representative characteristics of Korean culture, but “as Koreans become more acculturated to America, they begin to perceive reality according to more individualistic values” (150).

Marginality. The discussions above illustrate well that the situation of Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada has never been simple. Rather, it has been very complex; therefore, various kinds of sociological problems have constantly surfaced. Of course, some Korean immigrants have had a relatively smooth assimilation process and settled down in their new context successfully. However, the

majority of Korean immigrants have struggled with their life's issues, and this situation often hinders their dynamics in status and work in the new country (See pages 35-36, above).

Among these complicated elements, one of the most representative predicaments for Korean immigrants in North America is the issue of "marginality." This term implies that Korean immigrants experience a social and cultural displacement or uprootedness. "They are no longer in their home country, nor are they really part of a newly adopted country" (Moon 1998:233). They are in a totally new place with many problems. (See pages 36.)

A pioneer of Asian-American theology, Sang Hyun Lee, a professor of Systematic Theology and director of the Asian American Program at Princeton Theological Seminary, points out two characteristics of marginality in describing Korean immigrants' situation: "in-betweenness" and "non-acceptance" (Sang Hyun Lee 2001:57). These characteristics are essential problems for almost all Korean immigrants' lives. There have been many barriers because of the dominant group's "non-acceptance." Therefore, these non-acceptance experiences and identity crisis from "in-betweenness" often produce a huge sense of shame and discouragement. Gradually, a wall of separation is created between the public and the private, the political and the personal.

Jung Young Lee, another Korean-American theologian, also struggles with this issue. He rejects the classical definition of marginality that emphasizes only the negative aspects of alienation, rejection, struggles, and so forth. Instead, he suggests overcoming these negative distortions with a new norm of marginality, a sociological concept, which implies that struggling between two cultures clearly exists.

In fact, marginality has been an obstacle not only for Korean immigrants in North America but also for their active involvement in the world mission movement. Many other serious issues such as generational, cultural and inner/outer relational issues have surfaced which can be categorized as sub-issues of marginality. Marginality is the most complicated and fundamental issue that Korean immigrant Christians encounter today. As a result, the following two extreme sociological distortions have appeared. One is the pattern of “ghetto” and the other is “silent exodus.”

Ghetto. This marginality problem in the assimilation of Korean immigrants has resulted in so-called adhesive or additive assimilation, and apparently strong and permanent ethnic attachment (Moon 1998:233). Unlike most European immigrant cases, Korean immigrants tend to sustain their own cultural ethos and their ethnic community. As a result, they have formed the “Korean town and Korean community” through which they have kept some social distance from other cultural groups. This is of course a typical reaction of the first generation immigrant in North America.

Even though many Korean immigrants explain that they want to sustain their own identity and choose this kind of life pattern, some actually follow this ghetto pattern and become more exclusive because they fail to make adjustments into the new context. In this case, they come to be both geographically and culturally marginalized in the North American context. Here, many other issues regarding the dominant community or with other minority communities may surface.

Silent Exodus. This second pattern is the opposite of the first. While the first immigrant generation tends to form their ghetto, the second generation reacts to their marginalized situation through “silent exodus,” escaping their community toward non-Korean contexts. These new generations usually meet a more serious obstacle than

their parents. As they are more deeply involved in the white American world than their parents, they cannot find comfort in their own ethnic community because their ethnic attachment is not strong enough (Moon 1998:234).

This phenomenon has also been observed in Korean immigrant church contexts. For the last few decades, even though the number of Korean immigrant churches has rapidly increased, 90% of college or over college Koreans have left their ethnic church (TG Ministry 2006:5). This is a severe shock for Korean immigrant church leaders. Sung Kyu Park investigates four main reasons for this exodus of the second generation from the Korean community and church: Its high emphasis on Korean ethnicity, negative spiritual experience, new needs, and structural limitations (1997:29-44). All elements are closely related to their disappointment toward the first generation and conflict between their traditional value/culture and the Western one.

In fact, most such Korean Americans have never belonged deeply to the Korean culture or social community. *The Los Angeles Times* reported on this phenomenon in an article entitled “Silent Exodus” (1994). Many of the young generation leave their own community to reduce their cultural conflict; however, they usually experience that the dominant society does not accept them as real Americans or Canadians. In this case, they are in a more serious wilderness, in the place of in-betweenness and homelessness. Therefore, some of them later choose to cherish and honor their Korean tradition, culture, and language more.

Inouye referring to Hiebert shares his estimate regarding the rate of acculturation among cultures. While northern Europeans, like the Germans, Swedes, British, and French, usually take three to five generations to acculturate completely to American culture, and southern Europeans, like Greeks, Italians, Basques, and Spanish,

take five to seven generations, those from Asian cultures, like Japan, China, and Korea, take in excess of seven to nine generations for a complete cultural meltdown to occur (Inouye 1999:172). Therefore, Korean immigrant community faces the need of presentation of clear direction for the next generations including their culture, value, and even church ministry.

Relations with Other Ethnic Communities. On April 29, 1992, after a jury, whose members were predominantly white, exonerated four white police officers charged with beating Rodney King, an African American motorist, many angry and destructive rioters attacked the streets and markets in South Central Los Angeles. It was a very sad day for Korean immigrants because Korea Town was specifically targeted by African American and Latino rioters (Hurh 1998:121), Hurh observes that “the ‘system,’ including police, government agencies, and the media, controlled mainly by white Americans, failed to protect the Korean minority and other victims” (121).

How could this happen? What went wrong? Here we need to look at Korean immigrants’ interrelations with other ethnic groups. Empirically speaking, Canadian society is more open or favorable to new immigrants than is American society. Keeping this in mind, the following discussion focuses on the Korean immigrant relations with other ethnic groups in the United States.

1. Relations with White (European) Americans. Generally, notes Hurh, previous social studies show that “white Americans’ perception of Asian Americans has fluctuated over time – from inscrutable heathens, to model minority, and then to overachieving and threatening minority” (Hurh 1998:126). Although many recent reports in the media positively portray Korea as a country with rapid economic growth, and Korean Americans as a successful model minority, “white Americans consistently

rank Koreans low in social distance surveys and public opinion polls. This fact does not necessarily mean that white Americans are hostile to Korean Americans; it may mean, rather, that white Americans are still not familiar with Koreans and/or Korean Americans.” (128). Hurh argues:

It is interesting to observe that in general the dominant group does not need or like the minority as much as the minority need or like them. Past studies indicate that nonwhite minorities in the United States like white Americans almost next to their own race or ethnic group, whereas many white American do not reciprocate this feeling. (1998:128)

Fortunately, there have not been any significant conflicts between white Americans and Korean immigrants corporately in general.

2. Relations with African Americans. Both Korean immigrants and African Americans have not known each other well regarding history, culture, and experience in the United States. Both groups had some limited contact with each other before, such as the Korean War and Korean women marrying African American soldiers (Hurh 1998:131). In the 1970s, however, “these two groups of people suddenly found themselves in the United States under different circumstances: one as merchants and the other as customers in inner-city black neighborhoods” (131). Afterwards, there have been both the corporate level conflict and the individual level conflict between them.

The roots of individual conflicts can be found in racial and ethnic differences such as language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and mutual prejudices. However, says Hurh, on the corporate level, “the roots of African American and Korean immigrants’ conflicts are structural – that is, they stem from the social structure that has created a growing urban underclass largely made up of black and Latino Americans” (135).

It is not an easy task to determine the perfect solution for these conflicts. However, it seems that as long as these structural problems remain unresolved, conflicts between black Americans and Korean immigrants, relatively new immigrants, will continue, even though many efforts have been made by both ethnic communities to improve relations. Here the church plays a key role.

3. Relations with Asian Americans. Frequently, many Western people assume that the new immigrants from Asia have many things in common, but this is an unfortunate misconception. In fact, there are many racial, cultural, class, nativity, and generational differences among Asian Americans. Fortunately, however, no significant overt conflict has been observed among them. Instead, there has been significant cooperation among Asian Americans as time passes; as a result, the issue of the pan-Asian solidarity is vivid in both their academic fields and their actual communities today.

In addition, pan-Asian interethnic marriages have also increased, notes Hurh. “Korean immigrants’ interaction with other Asian immigrant communities is expanding as the number of second and third generation Korean immigrants increases – not only in the rising rate of intermarriage with other Asian Americans, but also in the areas of political empowerment, civil rights,” and related areas (139). Where the population of Asian immigrants in both the United States and Canada is increasing rapidly, it is likely that Korean immigrants will play a key role in the pan-Asian movement.

Korean Immigrants and their Own Society

Traditionally, Korean family structure has been formed under the teachings of Confucianism. This teaching consisted of five human relationships, and four of them are related to family: between father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother,

members of one family and of another family, and between king and subject (Bogardus 1968:56). Since this teaching has been formed through typical patriarchal societies and cultures, naturally there have been many kinds of conflicts among Korean family members when they moved into the United States or Canada, which have totally different social structures. Hurh describes these differences well which may cause the conflicts in Korean immigrant families:

The fundamental difference between the Korean and American family systems derives from two contrasting sets of family values or ideologies: filial-piety centered Confucian collectivism, with its emphasis on family interest, duty, obligation, and mutual dependence among kin based on the social ethic of Confucianism, versus conjugal-love centered American individualism, with its emphasis on individual interest, rights, intimacy, and independence. (1998:83-84)

Here, we face the need to examine Korean immigrant families' adjustment and challenge in their new contexts.

New Lifestyle among Family Members. Most Korean immigrants brought their traditional family values and structure to their new countries. However, they quickly had to modify their values due to the different circumstances in the United States and Canada. Among these modifications, the most remarkable change of family life must be the relationship between the husband and wife, which Kwon calls "sex role conflicts" (1995:202). In Korea, the wives' duties were limited to within the home, such as taking care of the housework and rearing children. They were not deeply involved in their husbands' activities outside the home. Husbands usually were not concerned with domestic matters if they were trivial. However, immigrating to a new country changed the entire situation. They now have to deal with many activities together including working, shopping, and even spending time for amusement.

In fact, many domestic affairs in the new country cannot be resolved by Korean

wives alone and thus the wives need to find help from their husbands. Similarly, husbands alone cannot resolve external problems because their wives are also involved in all of their socio-economic activities. Therefore, all decision-making has to be done together. The husbands come to feel powerless over their wives, yet they still wish to express the same amount of power they had in Korea. Husbands want their wives to maintain the same roles and attitudes as those in Korea. Structurally, however, this is impossible because the relationships and circumstances in their new context totally differ from those of Korea.

The role of Korean women, in particular, in the United States and Canada is much greater than in Korea. Working outside of the home, rearing children, tending the housework, and so on, are potential reasons for more problems in their families. Because of these matters, Hur calls this difficulty of Korean immigrant women “double burdens of double roles” (1998:88).

Secondly, in terms of the relationship between parents and children, the following problems have often been observed: communication problems between English and Korean, a generational gap or difference between two or three different value systems, children’s socializing style, approach to children’s education, and so on. Generally speaking, as time passes, children forget the Korean language and eventually are unable to speak Korean. On the other hand, the parents’ English skill usually cannot catch up with the proficiency of their children; therefore, many of the Korean immigrant families experience lack of communication even though they insist that they communicate well bilingually.

In addition, due to the surrounding culture and social interaction, language gap, and different authoritarian order system, children’s value system is easily changed, and

this contributes to generational gaps and conflicts between the parents and children. A typical Korean immigrant family is bilingual and bicultural. Korean-born parents (the 1st generation) and American-born children (the 2nd generation) or Korean-born but American-grown children (1.5 generation), are the norm of such families. For this reason, generational conflicts are inevitable. Moreover, the problem of home education is also commonly appearing in Korean immigrant families. Since the parents have no experience with the Western education system, they often cannot help their children despite their high level of education from Korea.

Ironically, in spite of parents' empirical limitation to help their children, Korean immigrant parents usually use all kinds of means to assist their children's academic advance. This is because one of the most important motivations for Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada has been to seek better educational opportunities for their children. Many Korean immigrant parents willingly sacrifice their family resources including their own lives for their children's success, and many Korean immigrant children have excelled in scholastic achievement, comparable to other ethnic groups.

Interplay between Different Values and Roles. As shown, Korean immigrants have to struggle with their new lifestyle, and the matter of interacting values and roles is not exceptional. Sadly, many Korean immigrant individuals and families have encountered huge problems and have actually broken out in the process of immigration and adjustment in the new context. Here, creative wisdom is needed, and Eugene C. Kim's practical advice toward the cure for the splitting family relationships is very valuable:

- (1) While it is virtuous to hold the traditional values, one must realize that human

behavior is heavily influenced by the cultural environment, new or old, in which the thought pattern and the behavior change. (2) Korean parents must realize that their authority will not and can not be maintained merely by enforcing their rules dogmatically. The concerns and rules must be communicated to their children with care and respect. (3) The question of ethnic identity must be answered in a self-fulfilling bi-cultural/bi-national context. (4) When it becomes evident that the conflict becomes serious between the elderly parents and the minors, it is advisable that the elderly parents live separately and should not conceive of it as a family degradation or family destruction. (5) Of all the changes of human behavior in the universe, perhaps the most drastic change has been the human sexual behavior, of which Korean parents do not want to speak openly. Parents must be cognizant of the values of sex education, either privately or in the school through which the children can be educated to form wholesome and constructive attitudes toward dating, marriage, and child rearing. (Eugene C. Kim 1990:34-35)

Identity Crisis. A number of studies report that Korean immigrants' mental-health is not good, and their level of depression is higher than other ethnic groups in the United States (Hur & Kim 1990; Kuo 1984; Lin et al., 1992, cited in Eura Jung 2004:1). This problem may result from their particular immigrant experience, especially interacting with other cultures and ethnic peoples. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Jung insists that there is a close relation between Korean immigrations' interaction with other ethnic groups and the identity problem:

For Korean Americans who are from an ethnically homogeneous country and thus, lack previous exposure to ethnically diverse environment, interaction with other ethnic group members in American society may pose difficulties. These problems can lead to Korean Americans' identity problems because, according to the Communication Theory of Identity (Hecht 1993; Hecht, Collier and Ribeau 1993; Hecht, Jackson and Ribeau 2003), interaction is directly related to identity. (Eura Jung 2004:2)

This can explain a part of Korean immigrants' identity crisis throughout immigrant generations. In fact, the questions, "Am I Korean? American/Canadian? Korean-American/Canadian? or American/Canadian-Korean? Who am I? What is my identity and where should my identity be positioned in this multiethnic society?" come out of being exposed to and interacting with other cultures and other ethnic people.

As relatively recent immigrants from an ethnically homogeneous society, Korean immigrants have experienced many kinds of interethnic/intercultural relationships. Through these interactions, Korean immigrants “may feel that there are large gaps between how they view themselves and how members of other ethnic groups view them” (Eura Jung 2004:7), which implies identity crisis. Seeking the causes of it, Jung’s diagnosis sounds reasonable: the lack of intercultural communication competence because of limited English proficiency and limited interethnic experience prior to their immigration, the social position as middle-person minority (intermediate dominant groups and other marginalized groups), and the acceptance of the presence of racial hierarchy, categorizing and positioning them lower than European Americans and higher than Latinos or African Americans (7-10).

If we look at the situation of the younger generations of Korean immigrants, this identity crisis seems far greater and far more prolonged. The lack of positive role models due to a short immigrant history; the opposite socialization process than the parents’; the communication gap between two languages and value systems; the unexpected or even unwanted moving; and the constantly changing environment in their transitional period between childhood and adulthood trap the younger generations in more serious identity crisis. The word of “tug-of war” (Hertig 2001) is an accurate expression which describes the struggle of the younger generations of the Korean immigrant.

New Occupational Status. In general, despite the high level of education, occupational skills, and the professional training they attained in Korea, Korean immigrants’ previous careers and backgrounds are often invalidated in the United States and Canada. In my pastoral experience in both Canada and in the United States,

many new Korean immigrants who had been working in Korea as engineers, teachers, pharmacists, and even professional physicians had to start at the bottom of the occupational ladder, running small businesses such as smoke shops, sandwich shops, or laundromats. Because of their limited English proficiency and lack of residential experience, most of them accept this as a matter of course. However, some find it difficult to abandon their past and so actually go back to Korea, leaving their children in Canada for educational purposes.

In summary, the working status of Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada has been mainly understood as a family-based small business. Slowly but continually, this pattern of work in the Western society has been changed with the influx of new professional Korean immigrants and the rise of younger generations, who have a wider choice in the work field.

Intermarriage. As mentioned previously, many U.S. servicemen stationed in South Korea during and since the Korean War married Korean women. As a result, just in the 1970s, 42,044 Korean female immigrants were admitted as wives of U.S. citizens (Shin 1987, cited in Min 1995:219). Many studies regarding these women report that they generally had a low socio-economic status, although there were some exceptions. Particularly, the language barrier and lack of assimilation capability made their marital adjustment very difficult. Moreover, a number of interracial married American men have neglected and even abused their Korean wives; as a result, a high rate of divorce has been reported among these families.

Through his research regarding the marital adjustment between Korean women and American men, Daniel Lee reports what he learned. First, he realized that the women experience a loss due to barriers in communication, social isolation, cultural

conflict, social prejudice, difficulty of raising bi-racial children, lack of supporting system, and limited mobility. On the other hand, they gain through their interethnic marriage individual freedom, security and convenience of life, human equality, opportunity for self-development and growth, broadening worldview, marital intimacy and companionship, cultural enrichment, less stress about future education of children, independent lifestyle, and exodus from the past life (Daniel Lee 1990:119-127).

Other Materials for Further Study of Korean Immigrants and Their Society. For further studies regarding Korean immigrants' history and society, the following are some valuable materials. *Asian Americans: Contemporary Trends and Issues* (1995), edited by Min, shows how immigration in the United States has changed the traditional customs, values, and other elements of lifestyles of Asian Americans (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese). Several contributors to the book also address how the Asian immigrants have influenced on American economy, politics, education, culture, social services, and inter-group relationship in major American cities.

The history and society of Korean immigrants in North America is well documented in the book, *The Korean Diaspora: Historical and Sociological Studies of Korean Immigration and Assimilation in North America* (1977), edited by Hyung-chan Kim. The ten contributors summarize well the Korean immigrant's historical, sociological, and practical issues; therefore this can be a foundational resource to study Korean immigrants in North America.

Similarly, *Koreans in America: Dreams and Realities* (Kim and Lee 1990) introduces several social issues of the Korean immigrant community from 1903 to 1990. However, unlike other literature, this book is unique in that it deals with some

special concerns such as intermarriage among Korean women, black and Korean conflict, generational conflict, and so on. This volume also contains some information regarding the Korean immigrant community in Canada, which is very valuable for this research.

Another valuable resource, “The Korean Diaspora: Migration, Adaptation, and Identity of Overseas Koreans” (2003), written by Yoon, provides useful insights. The article compares and theorizes about migration, adaptation, and identity of overseas Koreans in China, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), Japan, the United States, and Canada. Even though the researcher’s main concern is Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada, this material provides an overall picture of struggles in Korean Diaspora regarding their migration, adaptation, and identity around the world, and so it enables the researcher to compare and contrast Korean immigrants from five countries and their varying settlement patterns.

Korean Immigrants and their Church

In Korean immigrant history in the United States and Canada, churches have become the most important community organization through their focus on communal interaction, providing a variety of social, economic, religious and psychological functions. Korean immigrant churches have contributed to immigrant life significantly and became the center and supporter of immigrants who have faced many problems such as language barriers, cultural differences, racial discrimination, loneliness, and so on.

Several important characteristics of the Korean immigrant church can be identified, as discussed in the following section.

Characteristics of the Korean Immigrant Church

In general, the Korean immigrant church has been viewed as a providing organization to Korean immigrants in maintaining their social interactions. These churches help preserve ethnic identity by helping providing social interaction among Koreans on the one hand, and by helping to preserve Korean culture on the other.

Ethnic Identity and Solidarity Formed. Throughout American history, religion has been important to immigrants who use their religious traditions in the process of formulating their self-identity in a new social world (Williams 1988:293; Soyoung Park 2004:186). Religion functions as “a powerful scheme for sacralizing the elements of identity and preserving them through the identity crises that are endemic to emigration” (Williams 1988:278). This is also true in the case of Korean immigrants in the United States and Canada.

This phenomenon is not limited to the first immigrant generation only. Even the 1.5 and 2nd Korean immigrant generation find that their ethnic church is not merely a religious place, but also a place where racial, ethnic, and religious identification can be expressed (Sang Koo Kim 1996:19).

When Korean immigrants gather at church on Sunday, they worship in Korean. Even though today many of them try to provide English worship services for younger generations, the majority of the worship services are provided in Korean. Usually, they eat Korean food together after the worship service and give their children opportunities to learn Korean culture and language through Korean school that the church provides. Also, many people build friendships in the church and share information on Korean news, jobs, businesses, and children’s education. Regardless of the generation, Korean immigrants in church are exposed to much of their cultural content through language,

tradition, and food. Again, these elements reinforce their ethnic identity and solidarity.

Meanwhile, the characteristic of enhancing their ethnic identity and solidarity may also become the cause of Korean immigrants' lack of social involvement in the broader community. In fact, not many Korean immigrant churches are concerned with their neighboring communities and social issues. This is partly because of their language and cultural limitation. However, it can also be because of their theological emphasis – focusing disproportionately on individual salvation (Sung Kyu Park 1997:18). Therefore some non-Koreans complain, “Koreans! Once they came into this country, they built their own castle and have lived there.”

Social Security Found. Secondly, Korean immigrant churches have constantly provided spiritual, emotional, and psychological comfort to its members. We can easily expect to see both new and old immigrants who come to church to find solutions for their daily difficulties that they encounter in their new environment such as isolation, confusion, frustration, alienation, and loneliness caused by their marginal status.

Whether it was the intention of the host people or not, the deprivation of human dignity has clearly existed in American/Canadian society; therefore, Korean immigrants have formed the ethnic church as a place where social security is found, as a reaction to the prejudice and discrimination against them. They actually need a “home” for taking rest from the harsh life, and the immigrant church has provided it.

Spiritual Stimulation to American/Canadian Church. Another characteristic of Korean immigrant church is its impact on the Western society. From time to time, the Korean immigrant church's cohesive spiritual power has challenged the Western church. Even though this role had not been played well in the early period of immigrant time, after settling down in their new context, Korean immigrant church has gradually

stimulated many of the Western churches and Christians in this aspect. This might have been achieved through Korean church growth phenomena, mission conferences, and lately through their effective network and cooperation throughout their multi-generations.

Empirically speaking, whenever Western Christian leaders have a chance to communicate with me as a Korean church pastor, almost all of them ask about the Korean faith style (passionate and devoted attitude toward God), and want to know and even learn about it. From this spiritual climate, hundreds of Christian leaders have emerged who have the Korean background in the United States and Canada, especially from the second and third generations. Although there has been no significant historical or sociological study regarding these new generations of Korean Christian leaders, their growing numbers and their Christian impact on the world appears to be very high both in Korean immigrant communities as well as in other communities.

As will be noted in Chapter 6, the Korean immigrant Christians' missional potential has also kept emerging even in their new context. For example, Korean American or Korean Canadian Christians have many advantages over other people as missionaries due to their passion, sincerity, significant financial resources, and bicultural experience, including bilingual ability. Additionally, they usually are accepted and welcomed even in countries where Western imperialism had existed, and where white missionaries are less frequently accepted.

Ongoing Discussion between Mono-ethnic and Multi-ethnic Church. Korean church identity and relevant structures in the Western context is still an on-going debate even within the Korean immigrant community. Phenomenologically, there have been two main movements regarding this matter. First, the majority of Korean immigrant

churches have tried to form Korean ethnic or Korean ethnic-centered churches. There has been a long period of time when they have not provided adequate programs, structures, and leaders for their young generations. Therefore, many have worried that their Korean immigrant church may remain as just a first generation institution. Fortunately, however, some good model churches with generational cooperation among the Korean immigrant community have developed. As time passes, they will be able to raise more leaders from the younger generation who relate to their own generation.

On the other hand, many Korean churches have steered a different course, embracing a multi-ethnic church structure. Even though these churches began with a Korean immigrant church background, they (or some groups of them) want to follow this direction, having the fundamental conviction/assumption that “when possible, congregations should be multiracial” (DeYong et al. 2003:128). The number of such churches that moved from Korean church to multi-ethnic church is not many, but with the conviction of cultural creativity and the acculturation process, this church structure seems to have firm support. However, as DeYoung et al. point out (2005:35), it is the second or third generation Koreans who are carrying out this task and not the first immigrant generation leaders.

Church Division. Lastly and sadly, church divisions are another profound characteristic of the Korean immigrant church in the United States and Canada. Of course, various reasons account for this phenomenon, such as Korean authoritarianism, different “colors” of faith or denominations, conflicts between different social classes, and so on. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that huge social, relational, and spiritual damages result from this phenomenon.

In the midst of these conflicts and divisions, pastors may lose their spiritual

strength and authority; church members are hurt; and more importantly, younger generations are disillusioned. This is one of the biggest reasons why the younger generations do not trust the older generations at church. Unfortunately, today this phenomenon has become a chronic deformity in Korean church in the United States and Canada.

Pastoral Challenges of the Korean Immigrant Church

Since the situation in the United States and Canada is very different from the one in Korea, Korean immigrant pastors face lots of problems and needs. While many Korean pastors carry on their pastoral ministry successfully, many others do not. In my view, this difference is not only due to the pastor's spirituality but also their relevancy to their changed context. Following are some of the challenges Korean immigrant pastors face today.

Horizontal Movement of the Church Members. The most constant and urgent problem in Korean immigrant churches in the United States and Canada is the so-called "horizontal movement" of church members. Many people go in and out of the churches, not really staying in one church for a long time. External causes may be a product of the instability of immigrant life, such as a job or settlement situation. Often, there are not many choices for the immigrants in the job field because of their lack of Western background, including English skills; therefore, Korean immigrants have often changed their residence whenever they get better opportunities, which results in frequent movements of the church members.

In addition, many complicated internal causes of this phenomenon of "horizontal movement" can be identified, such as conflicts regarding leadership practice between pastors and church members. Some disagree to others' style for setting up the church.

Whatever the cause may be, it is clear that this phenomenon has often contributed to forming a negative image of Korean immigrant churches in their own communities.

Church Building Need. Another urgent challenge for Korean immigrant churches is the matter of owning the church building. According to a survey regarding Korean churches in Los Angeles, 85.7% of the Korean immigrant churches were renting their church buildings (Kang 1988:46). Of course, this survey needs to be updated, but still the general issue is clear. This lack of owning a facility has often causes instability for Korean churches and limits their activities. This matter of having their own church building also sometimes influences people in choosing their churches.

Relevant Leadership Development. There have been various pastoral problems and needs in the Korean Christian community; however, in my view, these all seem to be closely related to the issue of relevant leadership. In most cases, this leadership problem is present wherever Korean church conflict appears. Among the leadership problems, the most frequently visible components that should be discussed here are the pastors' naïve perspective toward their changed context and their Korean-style authority practice. For these reasons, there has often been lots of strife between the pastors and the church members, and this has also led to church splits. Pastoral leadership development for the Korean immigrant church is thus very important, because here all the components of culture, generations, language, value, authority, and ethnicity interplay together.

Above all, Korean immigrant churches need ministers who keep a balanced and informed perspective toward the American/Canadian culture and context. Of course, it seems simply and matter of common sense to use a different approach in their new context, but in many cases Korean pastors have not tried to learn their new culture or

context. Many of them don't seem to even think that ministry in America/Canada is significantly different from ministry in Korea. For this reason, there is clear need for continuing education for Korean pastors for their immigrant ministry. Surely, an informed cultural perspective toward the new context is the first step toward immigrant ministry preparation. Such leadership development should include dealing with the issues of culture, generations, values, counseling, authority practice, language, immigrant history, social change, and so on.

Preparation of the Next Church Structure. One of the most difficult but important tasks of Korean immigrant church pastors is the preparation of church structure for the next generations. As discussed earlier, there have been many struggles among Korean immigrant generations, and the church situation is not exceptional in this matter. For coping with this dilemma, there have been five ministry models in the Korean immigrant church community. Fortunately the capability of managing this issue has improved with time. Although there are many differences according to the local situations, five ministry models have been identified in Korean immigrant church settings.

- (1) Ministry Within a Church Model: This model implies a ministry in English inside the Korean first immigrant generation church such as children's, youth, and young adult ministry.
- (2) Church Within a Church Model: This model exists as a self-supporting and self-structural independent congregation (either American congregation or Korean English speaking congregation) which works together with the first immigrant generation church.
- (3) Church Alongside the Church Model: This ministry model shares its ministry with the first generation church (mother church) as a self-supporting, self-structural, and self-governing independent congregation.
- (4) Independent Church Plant Model: This model indicates an independent church planting under a general assembly or an annual convention.
- (5) Multi-Staff Independent Church Plant Model: This model implies an independent church planting through which more than two full-time pastors work together for an English-speaking Korean church or a multi-ethnic

church. (TG Ministry 2006:6)

Summary

Chapter 2 began with the history of the Korean *Diaspora* around the world, which commenced from the end of the 19th Century with importation of the gospel from the West. With several historical events such as the Japanese annexation (1910) and the Korean War (1950-1953), Korean people, who rarely left their limited territory for more than five thousand years, quickly spread all around the world: Asia, Europe, America, the Middle East, and even Africa. Meanwhile, even though almost all Korean *Diaspora* communities, including the Korean community in the United States and Canada, have developed with strong Christian influence from the beginning, there have also been other religious components present such as Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, and these components have also interacted with each other in Koreans' lives.

Korean immigrants' assimilation patterns have been characterized by "high level of ethnic attachment" and "low level of assimilation." In this process, many complex problems occurred, such as the issues of Marginality, Ghetto, Silent Exodus, and relational problems with other ethnic communities. At the same time, Korean immigrants have struggled with their inner community problems such as adjusting to the new family lifestyle, building new relationships, forming new values, experiencing identity crisis, and the intermarriage situation.

Lastly, the challenges of the Korean immigrant church have been discussed. The Korean immigrant church took the roles of enhancing its members' ethnic identity and solidarity, providing social security, challenging the American/Canadian church and society in many ways. Important issues and some urgent problems regarding the

horizontal movement of church members include limited workforce, relevant leadership development, and preparation for the next generations.

In the following chapter, the actual field research of this dissertation (interviews and observations) will be discussed in detail. Each case of the six Korean immigrant churches in the United States and Canada will be introduced, and some important themes for later discussions regarding the Scripture, self-identity, and mission will be presented.

Chapter 3

Study of Six Missional Korean Immigrant Churches

In this chapter, I report my research done in six Korean immigrant churches. First I introduce their history, leadership style, present mission practice, and uniqueness of the church. Then I report what I discovered from the research, which consisted of visitations, interviews, observation, and a review of the church material. Finally, I list some important concepts or insights for deeper consideration.

Field Research

As addressed in Chapter 1, the strategy for the phenomenological research of this study had been carried out through empirical research, an actual study of six Korean immigrant churches in the United States and Canada. This qualitative research is based on grounded theory and consisted of interviews (open-ended dialogues), observations, documents, and audiovisual materials whenever possible and relevant.

The research that led to this dissertation took place in January and February of 2006. Initially, I had selected twelve candidate churches for this research according to their reputation regarding their missional vitality and actual mission practices within the Korean immigrant Christian community. Then, several criteria (p. 28) and availability of my visitation were considered in selecting the final list. The churches selected were Grace Korean Church (Vancouver, BC), Community Church (Seattle, WA), Seoul Baptist Church (Houston, TX), Young Nak Korean Church (Toronto, ON), Ken-bit Korean Church (Toronto, ON), and Sarang Community Church (Los Angeles, CA).

When I visited the six different churches during my research, I interviewed

senior pastors, mission pastors, mission leaders, and relatively new converts after their immigration, as well as missionaries who were immigrants. In addition, I observed the church including their worship service, physical atmosphere, and printed material, and internet website. The basic profile of these churches is shown in Table 2, and a brief introduction of each church follows.

Church	Denomina- tion	Found- ed	Location	Atten- dance	Missionary Support	Date of Visitation and Activity	Interviewees
Grace	Independent	2002	9770 King George Hwy, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3T 2V6	1,800	5 sent missionary families & 21 supporting missionaries and organizations	Jan 6-8, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Sunday Worship	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Park) 2. Mission Pastor (Rev. Lee) 3. New Convert (Mrs. Koo) 4. Missionary (Mr. Kang)
Communi- ty	Presbyterian	1977	3727 240th SE, Bothell WA 98021	3,000	8 sent missionary families & 22 supporting missionaries and organizations	Jan 10-11, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Wed. Worship 3. Attended mission department	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Kwon) 2. Mission Leader (Mr. Kim, Mr. Byun) 3. New Convert (Mr. Choi) 4. Missionary (Mr. & Mrs. Jung)
Seoul	Baptist	1978	7775 Fairbanks-N. Houston Rd., Houston, TX 77040	1,600	5 sent missionary families & 165 supporting missionaries and organizations	Jan 20-22, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Sunday Worship	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Chai) 2. Mission Leader (Mr. Kim, Mr. Kwon, Mr. Sung, Mr. Cho) 3. New Convert (Mr. Lee) 4. Missionary (Mr. Choi)
Young Nak	Presbyterian	1977	650 McNicoll Ave. Toronto, ON. Canada M2H 2E1	3,600	4 sent missionary families & 43 supporting missionaries and organizations	Jan 26-28, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Sat. Early Morning Worship & Sunday Worship	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Song) 2. Mission Pastor (Rev. Jung) 3. New Convert (Mr. Lee) 4. Mission Leader (Mr. Kim)
Ken Bir	Presbyterian	1984	312 Rexdale Blvd. Etobicoke, ON M9W 1R6	1,500	25 sent missionary families & 106 supporting missionaries and organizations	Jan 28-31, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Sunday Worship	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Lim) 2. Mission Pastor (Rev. Paik) 3. Mission Leader (Mr. Pyo)
Sarang	Presbyterian	1988	1111 n. Brookhurst St. Anaheim CA	9,000	Sent 7 families Supports 63 families 20 organizations	Feb 24-27, 2006 1. Interview 2. Attended Sunday Worship	1. Senior Pastor (Rev. Kim) 2. Mission Pastor (Rev. Kim) 3. Missionary (Mr. Shin)
Mission Mobilizers						March 1-6, 2006	1. Missionary Min-young Jung 2. Missionary Joseph Hong 3. Missionary John Oh

Table 2: Basic Profile of the Six Churches

Grace Korean Church of Vancouver

In November of 2002, Rev. Shinil Park, who had been pastoring a mega-sized Korean denominational church in Vancouver, BC, planted an independent church, dreaming to establish a role model church that would be well contextualized in the

Canadian context as a Korean immigrant church by combining both “Koreanized Christian characteristics of being passionate and fully devoted” and “the Westernized church system.”

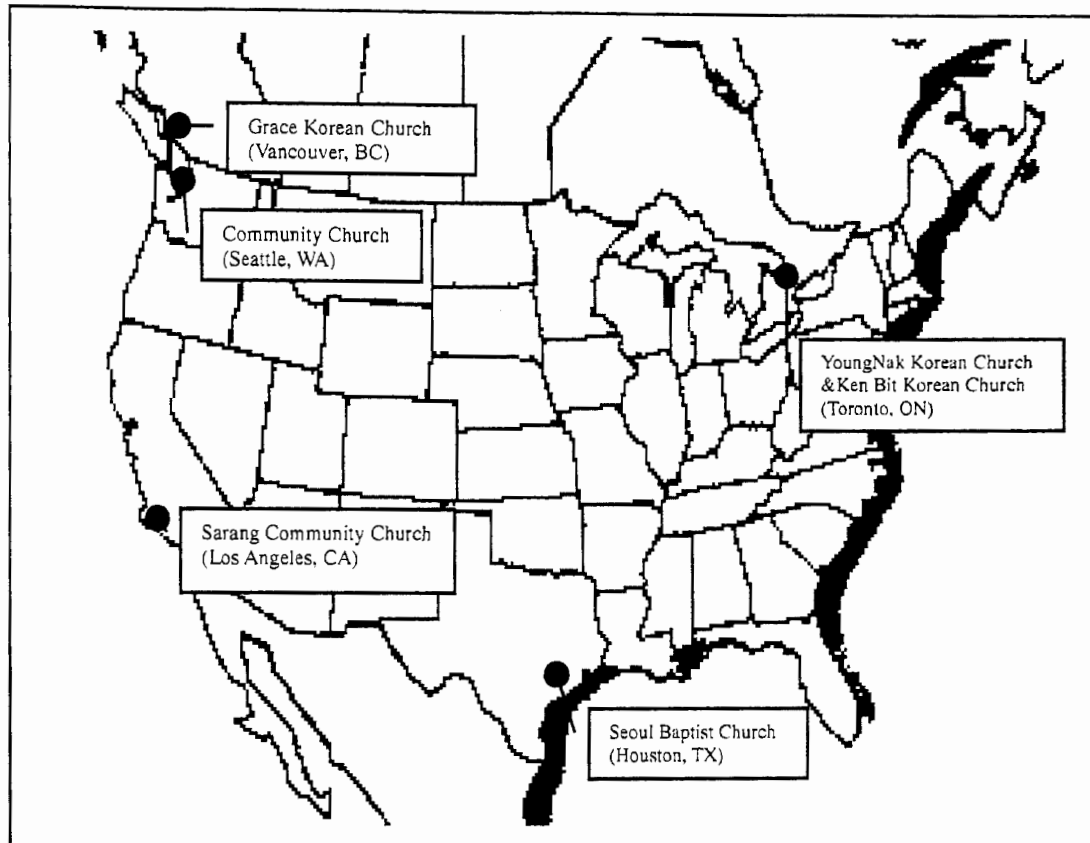


Figure 3: The Location of the Six Churches

Therefore, Grace Korean Church was established with a clear vision, stated by four sub-points. First, it is a cell church that focuses on evangelism, fellowship, healing, and recovery through its small groups. In 2006, there were 65 cells, all members gathered together weekly, and they shared their life’s concerns as a spiritual family. Second, it is an adventurous church. The Korean-style faith foundations of fervent passion and full devotion were combined with the Western-style’s organized system to produce a new pattern of structure and ministry in an independent church. Since not

many churches had attempted this new paradigm, it has been adventurous for this church. The third characteristic is that it is a missional church. All of the discipling and training is carried out, keeping mission in mind for the kingdom of God. In every part of this church, it is easy to observe the focus on mission toward all nations. Lastly, this church focuses on preparing the next generation. It focuses heavily on educating the next generation through legitimate worldviews, not just as foreigners or immigrants but as owners, and not as victims of discrimination or sense of inferiority but as leaders of God who created the world (GCC 2001).

The senior pastor, Rev. Park, had originally come to Canada to study. After a few years of experiencing Korean immigrant church and Christians, God had given him a heart of pity and passion toward the Korean immigrant church; thus, he remained in Canada to serve God through ministry for Korean immigrants. He is a visionary, an excellent preacher, and a servant leader. Besides an interview with him, I also interviewed the mission pastor (Rev. Lee), a new convert through this church after immigration (Mrs. Koo), and a missionary (Mr. Kang) who was preparing to go to his mission field in the summer of 2006.

The first impression of this church was that it was very active. There were lots of activities going on even though it was a weekday night, and I could feel and actually observe the activities including many meetings, generational activities, and discipling ministries during the week. In particular, they focus on four focal points of ministry: Worship & Prayer, Cell & Equipping, Mission & Evangelism, and Support & Service. All ministry structure is organized according to these four main ministries. One of the unique traits of this church is their pastoral cooperating team which takes the role of decision making. Unlike the majority of the Korean immigrant churches in which some

core church leaders take the role as decision makers, this church gives the power of making decision to this pastoral cooperating team. The term of service as a member of the pastoral cooperating team is one year, they are selected among the cell leaders, and a relatively young person (in his/her thirty's) in Korean culture must be included. Since it is a relatively new church and has grown quickly; the church has had to move nine times for their worship service in the last four years. Today, their weekly attendance is around eighteen hundred including children, and it became one of the most influential churches in the Korean immigrant community of Vancouver, BC.

In terms of ministry of mission, they have focused on, from its birth, prayer and support for the un-reached people groups, missional education and constant training, mobilization of new missionaries and sending them out, short mission trips and services around the world, ministry for other ethnic groups in the Vancouver community, and so on. Presently, they have sent out five missionary families from their church. In addition, they have cooperatively worked with twenty one missionaries and mission organizations to the world and in the Vancouver community.

Community Church of Seattle

The second church of my field research was Community Church of Seattle, which has existed in Seattle, WA, since 1971. In 2001, this church decided to call a 1.5 generation pastor, Rev. Joon Kwon, who had been a church member since he was a high school student long before. After he had finished his education and had some pastoral experience both in Korea and America, the church called him to be the senior pastor. Rev. Kwon thus decided to come to Seattle again, dreaming of a healthy and model immigrant church that keeps harmony in the middle of generational diversity. All of his immigrant experiences and pastoral insights, including some painful church-

related experiences, seem to have been very helpful for him to serve this church.

God has used Rev. Kwon's love and ministry towards the Korean immigrant church; as a result, Community Church of Seattle has experienced rapid church growth since the beginning of Rev. Kwon's ministry. Church attendance has increased from 200 to 3,500 in just six years. I interviewed five more people besides Rev. Kwon: two lay leaders of church mission team (Mr. Kim and Mr. Byun), a new convert through this church after immigration (Mr. Choi), and a missionary family from this church (Mr. and Mrs. Jung).

The vision of Community Church of Seattle consists of four elements: "Godly family-centered community (Psalm 127:1), mature faith community confessing Jesus is the Savior (Matthew 16:16-18), Acts-like community where the Holy Spirit began, ruled, and worked (Acts 2:42-47), missional community as the Great Commission to spread the gospel to the end of the earth (Matthew 25:18-20)" (CCS 2004).

When I visited this church, I could perceive their mission-centered ministry through all the signs on the walls such as a sentence posted at the exit of the church, saying, "You are entering the mission field," church bulletin boards, and other church materials. I joined a Wednesday night service, and it was a special service because a missionary from ComeMission (Miss Ko) reported on her ministry in France to support Korean missionaries who are preparing missions in African countries where people speak French. The reaction of the church towards this report was zealous, and all the present church members prayed strongly for her ministry and the world mission.

These mission-centered ministry and fruits seem to stem from their clear mission strategy: "In addition to Community Church vision that dreams Jesus' Community manifesting the kingdom of God in this world, we will strive to achieve the Lord's

Great Commission by transforming all resources of prayer, humans, and finance, through missional life and devotion for the world mission. We seek to be an ideal model combining a local church and a mission organization (Acts 11:19-30, 13:1-3, 14:26-28)” (CCS 2004).

Therefore, it is understandable that this church has kept intimate cooperation for its missional works with several evangelical mission organizations. In fact, Community Church of Seattle has not only supported these mission organizations but also has received much help from these mission organizations. For example, Community Church of Seattle has used the mission training programs of these organizations as follows:

(1) Eagle DTS (Discipleship Training School) is a 6 month program designed to encourage students in personal character development, cultivating a living relationship with God and identifying their unique individual gifts and callings. Cross-cultural exposure and global awareness from a Christian perspective are especially emphasized throughout the course. (2) InterCP Vision School is a 3 month program designed to educate and challenge Christians to be missional. This program especially focuses on the 10/40 window and mission for the unreached people group. (3) FMnC (Frontier Mission and Computer) Mission School is a combined (on-line and off-line) mission-education program to prepare the professional mission through IT and computers in the 21st Century. (4) ComeMission’s Jonah Mission School is a four day mission training program that challenges Christians to realize their missional responsibility to all nations. (CCS 2004)

Under Rev. Kwon and strong mission-centered church leadership, Community Church of Seattle has constantly expanded its outreach toward the world and Seattle area. Even during the new church building construction (2004), 170 church members went to various mission fields through many short-term mission projects. Currently, this church has sent eight missionary families and have supported and co-worked with/through 22 mission fields and organizations around the world.

Seoul Baptist Church of Houston

Seoul Baptist Church was founded in Houston in 1978. After slow but steady growth, this church experienced rapid growth since 1993 with their new senior pastor, Rev. Young-ki Chai, who transformed this church into a house-church structure model. They define “house church” as “a weekly meeting of laymen at a member’s house, whose purpose is to share the good news of salvation to lost mankind and service to each other” (SBC 1994). Rev. Chai went to Seminary when he was 41 years old long after his successful secular career, and came to Houston to serve Seoul Baptist Church with a dream to build a biblical church resembling the early churches of the Bible.

Under Rev. Chai’s leadership and ministry, especially through this house church program, Seoul Baptist Church has experienced phenomenal growth in size and maturity. Currently, about 1100 adults and 500 students and children attend in various Korean and English services on Sundays (among 1100 adults, over 200 people attend the English-speaking service). Most adults also attend about 120 Korean-speaking and 30 English-speaking house churches every Friday. A remarkable trait of this church’s growth in size is that it has occurred mostly by new Christians who joined the church through this house-church movement.

Interestingly, Rev. Chai who has a passion toward the lost has a clear policy of not accepting other Houston church members to this church. Rather, he focuses on winning the new souls for the expansion of the kingdom of God through his ministry, and this policy is publicly stated on their weekly church bulletin: “If you are already Christians who had accepted Jesus and gotten the conviction of salvation, we encourage you to serve other weak churches.” Personally, I have never seen such public announcement like this in any other Korean churches.

As their church motto states, “Church that raises laymen workers,” Seoul Baptist Church has worked to maximize the lay Christians’ full potential through both saving the lost and making them disciples. Their church purpose reflects this dimension very well, “Its purpose shall be to preach and teach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; to conduct worship services; to administer the ordinances of the New Testament; to improve the spiritual life of its members through religious education; to develop Christian Stewards of time, talent and material possessions and to advance the cause of missions at home and abroad” (SBC 1994).

One reason the well-settled laymen development program worked so well is because of the many well trained and highly qualified professionals among the Korean community due to Houston’s unique socio-economic context. They admit, “SBC has exceptionally high density of professionals in both the Korean and English speaking congregations. This unique membership profile is due to the major industries that the Greater Houston attracts and the employment opportunities they create for Korean American professionals. They include various professionals in oil, gas, chemical, international business, medical, IT and communications” (SBC 2004:3). Almost all of the interviewees for this research mentioned this point. Today, throughout all addressed ministry, Seoul Baptist Church is trying to use its cohesive spiritual strength and church resources for world mission. All interviewees agreed that this strength has been accumulated through the house church program, focusing on and training how to save souls in their daily lives.

In terms of its ministry of mission, this church’s vision of mission is very clear and strong. “Every Seoul Baptist Church member will find and carry out a God-given mission as going or sending missionary to save the lost souls in the world and make

them disciples” (SBC 2004:7). For them, “going missionary” implies people who participate in the cross-cultural mission fields in Houston, US and abroad to evangelize and share Christian love primarily with non-Christians in the field. They include both short and long term missionaries and community service projects. Comparing this to, “sending missionary” are people who support going missionaries by praying, sending money and material help, administrative support, and making short-term visits to encourage missionaries. They provide support through main congregations, house churches, mission ministry departments, and community center ministries (7-8). More intentionally, the mission of Missions Ministry Center, one of the two important structures of SBC, shows their missional direction well:

The mission of Missions Ministry Center is to support Seoul Baptist Church to: (1) empower every church member to live a simple, yet significant mission-driven life style in Houston (2) enable every family to send or support missionaries through their house churches (3) equip every house church to adopt and evangelize an unreached people group through actively sending and supporting missionaries to a target people group (4) extend the successful, mission-driven house church model to other churches around the world and share the experienced with them to replicate the model globally. (SBC 2004:8)

In fact, all church members have been trained in/through the house church program and structure. Through the house church program, many have met Jesus Christ, have been discipled, have encountered the missional responsibility, and have participated in missions. Therefore, two concepts of house-church and mission in SBC have closely interplayed in church members’ lives.

When I attended a house-church meeting, I could see how this church related mission with a house church structure. All house churches have intimately kept in touch with their own missionaries around the world. All members of house church know what happens in the mission field because of this intimate relationship. They

know the prayer concerns of missionaries and actually pray for them everyday. When their missionary has a financial need, the church matches the amount of money that each house church collects for their particular missionary. When the missionary visits the church, all arrangements and services for the missionary must be prepared through/by the members of that house church. Through these practices, mission comes into the life of every house church member.

Strategic *Plan for 2005-2014* of SBC explains some practical missions-oriented policies regarding mission through the house churches:

Every house church adopts a missionary or mission agency, maintains communication them, and provides supports including prayer and money. Every house church names its house church with the mission field name. Church's financial policy encourages the missionary support by providing limited matching fund for monthly supports and special mission projects. SBC continued to send Easter and Christmas offerings to Annie Armstrong Fund and Lottie Moon Fund and the Thanksgiving offerings to the local community service agencies. (SBC 2004:1)

Shortly put, SBC has empowered every church member to live a mission-driven life style. The next following confession reflects well on how SBC understands what they have done and what they are doing:

These growths were founded on two key principles in the house church program: (1) saving the lost souls and (2) making them disciples...God also gave SBC as significant external blessings as internal ones. With the relentless effort by the pastor, experienced shepherds, and all church members, many house church models have been adopted across the denominational boundaries and implemented successfully around the world. In the past few years, this church has become an exemplary house church model that can be used to glorify God and brings the lost souls to Jesus Christ. Significant spiritual energy, dedicated people, financial resources, and ministry knowledge have been accumulated. Some of them have been distributed globally through SBC's house churches themselves, various seminars and special meetings, publications and testimonials. Looking back the past decade, it is clear that God used Pastor Chai and the Seoul Baptist Church to reestablish and replicate the biblical house church model of the first century to the Korean churches around the world. (SBC 2004:1)

When I visited the Seoul Baptist Church, I observed several meetings, participated in a house church meeting, attended Sunday worship service, and interviewed the senior pastor (Rev. Chai) and five house-church leaders, so-called “shepherds,” (Mr. Kim, Kwon, Sung, Choi, and Lee). Among them, Mr. Choi is preparing his missionary work in Eastern Asia planning to leave in 2007, and Mr. Lee was the one who became Christian after his immigration. Currently, Seoul Baptist Church has provided five missionary families from the church, and it is serving 165 missionaries around the world through its 165 house churches.

Young Nak Korean Church of Toronto

Young Nak Korean Church was founded in 1977. It has continually grown till now, but during the period of the second senior pastor’s ministry (Rev. Lee, 1989-2004), it became one of the largest Korean churches in Toronto, Ontario. Today, Rev. Min-ho Song, the church’s third senior pastor, who has experienced both the Korean immigrant church as a 1.5 generation immigrant and the actual mission field of Philippine as an OMF missionary, is now serving approximately 3600 church members.

This church seems to have a clear mission philosophy and policy, which are based on both *Lausanne Covenant* (1974) and *Manila Manifesto* (1989). It states:

(1) We do our mission with a conviction that the whole church is sent to the world and obedience. (2) We point the holistic mission that has two axes of “evangelism” and “social responsibility.” (3) We develop the local leadership in the mission fields through cooperative work and take a serious of the contextualized process in the transmission of the gospel. (4) We focus on un-reached people group. (YNC 2005)

The first important missional stimulation of this church was sending out their first senior pastor, Rev. Kim, as a missionary to Russia after his retirement in 1991. Through his missionary work, there have been many church plantings and seminary

ministries. Secondly, in 1991, this church decided to adopt Kyrgyzstan as their spiritual family and has focused its mission on Kyrgyzstan through sending three missionary families and two self-supporting missionaries. Recently, this church has expanded its mission work to Buddhist countries mainly located in Southeastern Asia. It has supported missionaries in Cambodia and Thailand for several years, and it has also prayed to open the missional door for Myanmar and Laos.

One of the unique traits of Young Nak church's mission is its genuine concern toward other minority ethnic groups in Toronto area. The church has understood that the city of Toronto is the most strategic mission field in Canada, where 160 ethnic groups now live. It has planted and supported Myanmar and Laotian churches, and it is also preparing some church plantings for Thai and Cambodian people groups.

This mission toward the minority ethnics in the community has come out of their unique understanding of Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." There they view Jerusalem as their families, relatives, and friends. Judea, naturally, means their same ethnic groups in Toronto, and Samaria, for this church, implies other ethnic groups that live with them with different cultures, religions, and customs. For this reason, this church calls mission toward other minority ethnic groups Samaria mission. They state their vision for this mission:

In the minority ethnic groups' culture, language, tradition, and community that God permits us, we will help them to plant and to self-support, to develop their own leadership, and to expand the kingdom of God through participating their mission to their own countries. (YNC 2005)

This church has a clear plan and strategy for their mission to minority ethnics, consisting of demographic survey, study of identity, networking, church planting,

discipling, leadership development, and assistance for sending their own missionaries. Young Nak Church has cooperatively related to many mission organizations such as Philippine ATS, OMF, Wycliffe, Interserve, and the local leaders so that it maximizes missional efficiency through its networking. Currently, it is known that this church has sent out four missionary families and is supporting and cooperating with 43 missionaries and organizations around the world.

When I visited this church, I had attended one early morning service and Sunday worship service, interviewed the senior pastor (Rev. Song), who has his Ph.D. degree in the field of mission and been an actual OMF missionary from the place of Korean immigrant, the mission pastor (Rev. Jung), a mission leader (Mr. Kim), and a new convert through this church after his immigration (Mr. Lee). I had not had a chance to interview with a missionary from this church due to time limitations.

Ken Bit Korean Church of Toronto

In 1984, Rev. Park began planting a new church with five families in Toronto, and the present senior pastor, Rev. Hyun Soo Lim, had began his ministry there in 1986 as an assistant pastor and later became the senior pastor in 1990. Since he realized that the majority of church members had not yet encountered the good news, Rev. Lim began his ministry from the basics, letting the church members experience the Good News. After a few years, they finally began to respond to God's word and devoted themselves as real servants of the Lord.

Today Rev. Lim is well known as one of the most influential leaders for world mission among Korean immigrant community. He is a strong motivator and communicator for stimulating people's hearts for mission mobilization, a respected leader, practitioner, and exemplary role model. As the senior pastor of a mega-church, it

is not easy to practice personal evangelism regularly. Moreover, he has used many other networks for his effectiveness, and actually he is the president of GAP (Global Assistance Partners) today. Through his devotional service, Ken Bit church is now one of the mega-churches in Canada, but still very active in both evangelism and world missions.

In particular, Ken Bit church has been known as a representative of Korean missional church in Korean immigrant community. It is because this church has been a pioneer of mission for “Stan-countries” such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan since 1996 and North Korea in 1990s. Many church members including Rev. Lim have gone on short-mission trips to these countries where no contact existed.

In fact, God miraculously opened them the door of Central Asia mission through Korean Diaspora who had been forced to move and spread in those areas by the Russian government in 1937. These short term missionaries met third or fourth generation Koreans who spoke very little Korean and established them as bases of mission there, and began their ministry. Later these bases became foundation for the following mission works in Stan-countries for Korean immigrant church. The fact that this church is truly focused on this project is evident with 283 short-term missionaries sent to eleven countries in 2005. Naturally, Ken Bit church has developed its own mission training curriculum for the short mission project, shared their know-how with others, and led this movement among Korean immigrant community.

In terms of North Korea Mission, this church has used their Canadian passport, relatively easier than other passports for working in/with North Korea, and they have various ministries in both China and North Korea such as the asylums for the aged, orphanages, school ministry, relief ministry, business mission, noodle factory, and

others.

The uniqueness for mission of this church is its approach toward mission preparation so called “Talent Mission.” According to their explanation, “Talent Mission” is using all human resources in the church both to support the missionaries and to secure the channel to find capable missionary supports from among the church. Whatever the people have, this church wants to develop and equip it for missionary resource. Their list includes capability of evangelism, praise, music, medical, dental, teaching, computer, car, business, hair-design, cook, sports, media, architecture, child care, etc.

Another uniqueness of this church is their open-minded attitude toward other churches. This church has a good reputation of working with other churches and organization through many networks and to share their experience and material with others. This church has a zealous attitude for personal evangelism. Several interviewees revealed the main reason for their ongoing concern for the personal evangelism in the church as their senior pastor’s passion toward winning lost souls. Even though Rev. Lim is very busy with many ministries, he has maintained practicing this personal evangelism regularly. Naturally, all other church leaders and people follow what he does. At the same time, like the previous church, Young Nak Korean Church of Toronto, Ken Bit Church has the clear vision and burden for other minority racial group in Toronto area.

All these efforts and experiences toward the lost and the world mission have resulted in starting a professional education-structure. Therefore, this church had had a mission institute for several years, and today that institute recently changed its name to GAP (Global Assistance Partners) Mission Institution and became a formal theological

institute for the denomination, the Korean Presbyterian Church in America in 2005.

When I attended the Sunday worship service, I could feel their passion toward God and the lost souls. Many new comers showed up during that Sunday worship service. There were also hundreds of people who have completed “Purpose Driven Life 40 Days,” which had been developed by Saddleback Church. What impressed me was that it was carried out in the early morning prayer time, and hundreds of people showed up and completed that training.

Today, this church has 1500 members, and there have been 25 missionary families sent out from this church, as the fruit of missional ministry. This church is supporting 106 missionaries and organizations around the world. For my research, I have attended their Sunday Worship Service, interviewed the senior pastor (Rev. Lim), the mission pastor (Rev. Baik), and a mission leader (Mr. Pyo).

Sarang Community Church of Los Angeles

In April of 1988, Rev. Oh, the first senior pastor, and twelve people planted a new church. It has rapidly grown, and now it is the biggest congregation within the Korean immigrant community in North America. The reason I chose this church for my research is not because it is the biggest, however, but because of its demonstrated vitality, as indicated by active small groups, discipling, service, and mission. In 2008, the congregation’s membership reached ten thousand including children. For serving the church, there are fifty-two church workers and 318 cell groups, which 340 cell leaders and 390 cell teachers are serving.

According to the introductory book of the church, there have been four clear visions for Sarang Community Church. The first vision is equipping the lay people so that they can respond to God’s calling. The second vision is building up the church,

fulfilling its responsibility for the next generation. It is easy just to point out the importance of building up the next generation in an immigrant church. However, this church clearly understands the potential of the next generation, which will have bilingual ability, rationality, integration, and love of mankind. The third vision is standing up as the healing community among parents, children, husbands and wives, who are suffering from issues relating to being immigrations. And the fourth vision is obeying God's mission around the world.

For practicing these four focal visions, Sarang Community Church has tried to have a dynamic worship, effective discipleship, and small groups. However, the most distinctive characteristic of this church is that it had been formed through combining Koreanized-discipling-ministry developed in Korea with culturally relevant practice in the immigrant context. This characteristic can also be observed in their selecting process of the new senior pastor. Rev. Seung Wook Kim, the second senior pastor, is a 1.5 generation Korean American who understands both generations and speaks both languages perfectly. He knows both what spiritual benefits have been formed from the previous immigrant generation and how these benefits can be combined into the next generation's context. He seems to keep the balance well between generations, cultures, and languages.

In terms of doing mission, Rev. Kim explains his three main concerns. First of all, this church tries to work together with three generations. Each generation has its strength and uniqueness, and all their strengths and uniqueness can be combined and maximized in their mission field. Through experience, this church comes to understand the mission field as the effective context where all three generations embrace together. There success of faith through generations takes place.

Secondly, Sarang Community Church clearly opens their eyes toward other ethnic minority communities in the Los Angeles area. They want to work together with them as partners for the kingdom of God. This church therefore has developed networks with Chinese, Japanese, and Hispanic Christians for effective evangelism.

This church views the local setting of Los Angeles as a mission field because it has received many immigrants from around the world. In this situation, Sarang Community Church strongly believes that a very effective mission strategy is to spread the gospel through this migration network, considering migrations' missional potential.

Thirdly, Sarang Community Church does its best to develop many new missionaries, regardless of their people's ages. For example, this church is trying to develop many "silver missionaries" who go to the mission field after their retirement. They also develop many missionary internships for young people who go to the mission field for one or two years of service. They expect to develop many long-term missionaries through this structure.

As a mega-church, this congregation has various missional activities and training programs, such as short-mission training program, mission feast, many gatherings for missionary candidates, prayer meetings for mission, and so on. The church has a professional department for overseas mission. Several full-time workers serve this department.

Overall, this church attempts to keep the balance between global and local. They feel the church's responsibility is not only for the world but also for the local people. Sarang Community Church especially works with Hispanic people who live with them through supporting their ministry, providing scholarships for the local school, and starting a structure for Hispanic ministry called LAMP (Latino American Mission

Project). Sarang Community church has also worked through World Relief, missionary support, sending missionaries, ministry for missionary kids, and similar ventures.

Currently, this church has sent out seven families as missionaries and is supporting 63 missionary families around the world and 20 mission organizations. I attended their Sunday worship service and interviewed the senior pastor (Rev. Kim), the mission pastor (Rev. Kim), and a mission leader/missionary (Mr. Shin), who is in charge of the department of overseas mission.

Findings from the Visitations and Interviews

Through these visits and interviews, I have made many discoveries. After collecting the data from interviews, visitations, reviews of church materials, I organized the data according to my three main concerns: Scripture, self-identity, and mission. For analyzing these, I read all the data repeatedly, checked the key issues or commonness, divided them into several themes, and then made generalizations. Finally, I carefully selected some important themes that I will explore in later chapters.

In reporting the finding of this research, I will first give an overview of the general findings of identified themes or commonness from the analysis of the data. Then I will choose several important insightful concepts that will be further discussed in developing and articulating a Korean immigrant mission theology in the later chapters.

Findings regarding Scripture

Findings regarding Scripture can be emerged and summarized as follows.

General findings. The responses of the interviewees for this research revealed that these churches often identify themselves as the ones who received God's calling

like Abraham or Moses. As Abraham was called from Ur and Moses was called from Egypt to the Promised Land, they had been called to the new country by God. This understanding was very clear especially for the new converts who became Christians after their immigration. Many of them commonly understand their immigration as God's calling. Mrs. Koo in Vancouver and Mr. Lee in Houston had not been Christians in Korea and their contexts had not been favorable to becoming Christians in Korea. They believed that God called them to the new context to transform them as Christians. In fact, God's calling to be immigrants is very meaningful for them.

This cognition is so important because it has led them to have a meaningful purpose and positive interpretation about their new life in a foreign land. Even though their level of understanding about God's calling may not be full, they at least feel something is there in their new life. Many of my interviewees used the phrases, "meaning of life," "life's ultimate goal," and "mission related life."

In terms of their physical context, two attitudes were discovered. One group viewed their immigrant life's context negatively. Their perspective toward their new land was something to overcome or conquer as Joshua in the Promised Land. These people felt victimized or had negative concepts about their new land. On the other hand, another people group viewed their new context very positively. Like God's word in Jer. 29:3-7, these people understand their new land as God's permitted land. They must settle down and take root there. Sometimes, despite their harsh experience, they are able to view their experience as God's training, including the new culture, language, and differences.

Regarding the meaning of life, many cite 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may

declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

This verse was originally given to the Jewish *Diaspora*. Peter let them realize their new identity for God as “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” Many interviewees focused on the reason of their selection, “that you may declare the praises of him.” Acts 1:8 is also very meaningful to the interviewees. As Jesus’ disciples were sent from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and the end of the world, so Korean immigrant Christians have to move in a similarly missional direction.

Generally, the interviewees tended to connect their life and changes to biblical figures and content. However, my impression was that they did not seem to consider Scripture equal to their immigrant situation. They need a deeper understanding of Scripture regarding their immigration.

Important/insightful concepts. These findings led me to the following concepts for a deeper discussion in Chapter 4: (1) important concepts such as “moving” and “being marginal,” (2) biblical meaning of being an immigrant, (3) biblical meaning of their new context, and (4) biblical meaning of their new task.

Findings regarding Self-identity

Several important findings regarding self-identity emerged from my interviews and other research.

General findings. Surprisingly, almost all interviewees understand their immigration as God’s Providence. They believe that they came to a new country to be used as God’s instrument for blessings.

I found a clear difference between pastors and lay people regarding the depth of cognition of God’s blessing or missional calling for them. While lay people tend to

view their immigration as God's calling to become Christians or a better Christian, pastors or mission leaders strongly believe that God's calling includes the responsibility toward world mission through their immigrant experience and situation.

In terms of their immigrant experience in their assimilating/aculturating process, my interviewees' response can be categorized into two categories. The majority of the people described their experience as a very painful process; they expressed their bad memories without hesitation, such as struggling with language, culture, discrimination, and so on. In most cases, these difficulties were confronted through patience, ignorance, or anger. Interestingly, many of these interviewees, however, confessed that marginality-related experiences have actually helped their faith in God. Due to these marginality issues, they had to kneel before God in humility and ask for God's help. Clearly, the marginality experience has had strong impact on Korean immigrant Christians' faith development.

A few people, however, did not view this problem so seriously. They admitted that there had been many difficulties, but they considered them as part of a natural process. If one goes into a new context, there must be a different language, culture, and discrimination. Immigration issues did not have as much negative impact on these people. They accepted this phenomenon as something reasonable, to be expected.

Asked to categorize themselves as, Korean, American/Canadian, American/Canadian-Korean, or Korean-American/Canadian, almost all the participants answered that they are Korean. There was no difference whether they have American/Canadian citizenship or not. Even though they have lived in the U.S. or Canada for a long time, even though they have used English fluently, and even though they have worked in an American/Canadian context, they still regard themselves as

Koreans. According to Mr. Pyo of the Ken Bit church, even though he has lived in Canada for more than 30 years, he still dreams in Korean context and in Korean language.

A few categorized themselves as Korean-American/Canadian, but their rationale for such categorization is quite similar to those who selected solely Korean. Even though they have worked hard, they think that they could not assimilate perfectly into the American/Canadian context. Even if they work or minister in perfect English, they tend to come back to Korean context. Of course, some of them point to their unique responsibility of the 1.5 generation to bridge the generations.

Important/insightful concepts. For a deeper discussion regarding self-identity of Korean immigrant Christian in Chapter 5, I have identified five important concepts for theological reflection: (1) The issue of self-consciousness as Korean immigrants in relation to God's Providence, (2) the ultimate purpose of their immigration (American/Canadian Dream vs. Kingdom Dream), (3) theological approaches for their being, marginality, and passive experience, and (4) perspective toward their identity (In-either, in-both, in-beyond) for Korean immigrant.

Findings regarding Mission

Here also several important issues and dynamics regarding mission emerged as follows.

General findings. Almost all of the investigated churches had some form of missional ecclesiology. Many interviewees, especially the pastors, have had a clear conviction that the church exists for mission. Mission is central to the culture of each church. I could see their missional self-consciousness in many objects, such as Sunday bulletin, church introduction book, banners, and even the church motto on the wall. The

Sunday bulletin of Sarang Community church of Los Angeles defining themselves, “Church that obeys mission mandate” and the posted sentence of Community church of Seattle at the exit of the church, “You are entering the mission field” are fine examples.

Another finding is that these churches try to use all of their human resources for mission, not just those of pastors or missionaries. They involve all attending church members in mission, regardless of their age or job. For example, Sarang Community church is trying to transform their three generations to join in mission. Ken Bit Korean church is using a “Talent Mission” concept so that all of the church members can serve through who they are and what they have.

Networking with other churches or mission organizations is another important point of similarity among these churches. Both leaders and the lay people have been influenced by constant networking with other missional figures or organizations. All churches have an intimate relationship with mission organizations for cooperative work; they help each other and work together.

For example, Community Church of Seattle and Grace Korean Church of Vancouver have regularly proposed a mission training program, “Jonah School,” developed and led by a mission organization, named “Come Mission.” When I visited those churches, I could find several publications and periodicals of Come Mission, and I noticed that both churches have supported several missionaries of Come Mission. While the churches used that mission organization, Come Mission also got opportunity to mobilize the people through the churches. I could see the creative synergy among such relationships.

In terms of benefits for immigrants in doing mission work, all interviewees affirmed this. They recognized their own changes were due to their immigration, and

listed such benefits as: cross-cultural experience, obtaining another language, experiencing leaving, marginality experience, enduring difficulties, financial capability, and attaining another passport. Some pointed out that Korean-American/Canadian persons can enter mission contexts where Caucasian missionaries are not welcomed.

Another characteristic of these churches, as seen through the interviews, is that they all had a clear mission policy. Everyone from the senior pastor to a new convert of the church could explain the uniqueness of their mission. Compared to other Korean immigrant churches, they have had concrete mission policies and plans for a long time. In the case of Seoul Baptist Church in Houston, even though their mission policy had been developed just one year before, they had studied and prepared a contextualized mission policy in which they had deeply considered the church's uniqueness. They intend to consistently follow this policy for the next 10 years. Sarang Community church has also defined its mission policy through its annual mission report and church introducing book. Besides, the Ken-bit and Young Nak church of Toronto and Grace Korean church of Vancouver have clarified their mission policy through their Internet church websites.

Constant missional teaching is the last point of commonality among these churches. The senior pastors consistently have taught missions through their sermons, printed-materials, co-worker's ministry, and other means, such as Internet homepages. Through these media, they have influenced all of the church's members.

Important/insightful concepts. Among these general findings, I will later discuss in more depth in Chapter 6: (1) missional ecclesiology, (2) missional potentials of Korean immigrant Christians, (3) mission practice as church culture, and (4) leadership issues for bringing missional transformation.

Summary

In this chapter, I have reported the background information of the churches I visited and interviewed. I elaborated on each church's history, uniqueness, strength, leadership practice, and characteristics of missional ministry. Following this, I reported the findings that emerged as common among all the investigated churches. From this process, I chose some important insights or concepts for a deeper discussion.

In general, my interviewees tend to identify their lives with some of the biblical figures. It seems that they have tried to attain some meaning for their immigration through Scriptural parallels. This effort may be quite a legitimate process, but it seems that not many Korean immigrant Christians have not fully explored the meaning of such biblical parallels. Not many Korean Christians have had enough educational opportunity in regard to this. Therefore, relevant biblical teachings regarding their self, context, and task should be prepared and taught.

This lack of reflection and educational opportunity regarding their immigrant-ness is not exceptional in the matters of perceiving the themes of self and mission. Although many of my interviewees perceive their identity positively and mission as their life's goal, they are still a minority. In fact, this attitude and perspective are not common in many other Korean churches. Comparing these relatively missional Korean immigrant churches and Christians with the majority of Korean immigrant churches, pastors, and Christians suggests that these churches have not had enough chance to reflect on their becoming immigrants. Even simple contextualization has been ignored and not practiced among the majority of Korean immigrant churches. For this reason, developing contextualized mission theology for Korean immigrant Christians is imperative so that the majority of Korean immigrant churches and Christians can

experience identity transformation and use their missional potential for the world mission.

At the same time, my interviews and visitations show that these churches have struggled with marginality issues such as language, culture, and discrimination, and that through that experience, some of them have recognized the potential of immigrants. Considering their lack of reflection regarding who they are, where they are, and what they do, it is surprising that they easily list numerous beneficial elements for world mission from their immigrant experience. This means that they already possess huge potential for world mission, consciously or unconsciously. If Korean immigrant Christians experience legitimate and relevant identity transformation, their missional potential can be much more fully realized.

Chapter 4 through 6 provide more in-depth discussion on these issues. I synthesize what I have found from my visitations and interviews regarding history, culture, personal and communal human experience, Scripture, and social change for theologizing.

Chapter 4

Korean Immigrant Christians and the Scripture

In this chapter, I will discuss Korean immigrant Christians and the Scripture. It is a process to determine the answers to questions such as what the Scripture means to Korean immigrant Christians and what biblical truths are relevant for their immigrant life. From the interviews, I selected three main themes for a deeper discussion in this chapter: biblical meaning of being an immigrant, biblical meaning of their new context, and biblical meaning of their new task.

My interviews and visitations allowed me to see that Korean immigrant Christians tend to identify themselves with several biblical figures such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and the Israelites in the wilderness toward the promised-land. Generally, they have felt God's calling for a new adventure under His Providence; therefore, they knew their lives had something special regarding their life's final goal or ultimate purpose. Another important point in analyzing Korean immigrant Christians' lives is studying their perception for their new context because it has influenced their relational attitude toward other people.

As addressed in Chapter 1, I have experienced my identity transformation through reading the Scripture through an immigrant's eye. Specifically, that amazing experience came from new discoveries about my new self, new context, and new task cognition through new findings and interpretations of the biblical truths. What was interesting was that this point had been repeatedly confirmed and observed throughout the entire interview process. Let us expound on these concepts and other issues.

Major Concepts and Issues

From both my personal experience and interviewees' experience, several important concepts and issues emerged. They are "moving" and "being marginal" motifs, understanding self, perception of context, and grasping of new life's goals. Therefore, I articulate these concepts and issues in the light of Scripture.

"Moving" and "being marginal" motifs

The Scripture consists of many important frameworks of moving. As addressed in Chapter 1, in the Old Testament, we can see some important moving: moving of Abraham and Sarah to Canaan, moving of Jacob's family to Egypt, moving of the Israelites from Egypt to the wilderness under Moses' leadership, moving and conquering Canaan under Joshua's leadership, Israel's moving out and returning because of exile and recovery, etc. In the New Testament, we also see Jesus' moving into history (incarnation) and itinerant ministry, the believers' spreading from Jerusalem to the Gentile lands, Paul and other church leaders' moving around the world for mission, etc. The moving motif in the Scripture, therefore, is very profound and important. Here, I see the need for Korean immigrants Christians to link their moving (immigration) experience to the moving motif of the Scripture. This is clear. In history, God has been moving, and he is still letting his people move for his universal purpose.

Another motif that has to follow the moving motif is "being marginal." In the Scripture, whenever God's people move, they usually experience "being marginalized." Usually, these experiences have been repeated in the life and experience of the immigrants. Therefore, positive perception from positive interpretation is strongly needed. I will further discuss marginality when I discuss about self-identity issue in Chapter 5.

Then, how can Korean immigrant Christians reflect their moving and marginal experiences through the Scripture? Where can they find their meaning of life as immigrants? Through what in the Scripture can they reflect their life? Hyo Sub Choi discusses four main issues of immigrant theology: pilgrim, margin, *shalom*, and *Missio Dei* (Choi 1995:32-52), and I borrow three among them as important biblical images that express the immigrant's moving and marginal motifs: the images of pilgrim, margin, and *shalom*. Now, let us trace the biblical records and think what these may mean for the Korean immigrant Christians.

Korean Immigrant Christians' Self as Pilgrims

Most of all, I will begin my discussion with seeing an immigrant as a biblical image of a pilgrim. As explained in Chapter 1, a pilgrim is a fine theological lens to understand a Korean immigrant Christian's life. A pilgrim is very different from a simple tourist. Pilgrimage is holy and purposeful. Pilgrims do not seek any perfect permanent settlements but are already ready to leave and journey toward a God-promised goal. There are many actual pilgrims in the Scripture and, even though they have different reasons for becoming pilgrims, all of them gradually come to consciousness about their pilgrimage either when they leave or when they are moving.

The same phenomenon has been observed in my interviews. Some came to North America because of relatives' invitation, some came because of study, and others for a job. However, many of them have come to confess that they suddenly realized that they became immigrants. The same experience was true for me. I came to Canada in 1997 just for study and church ministry. My original plan was to stay abroad for just two years. However, one day I suddenly realized that I became an immigrant even though I had not seriously considered it. Gradually, I came to understand God's will for me. I am

a pilgrim with God's calling.

In Genesis chapter twelve, we can see that Abraham had a clear consciousness of God's call to move. Jacob became a wanderer (Genesis 28) and Joseph became a prisoner and became an immigrant in Egypt (Genesis 37). The reason Jacob's family moved was due to famine (Genesis 46), and Moses and the Israelites' Exodus was because of a political situation to liberate the Israelites (Exodus 12). Moreover, Israel's exile took place because of a war, and persecution from the dominant society was the reason for the early Christian's moving. The early Christians also perceived themselves as pilgrims, thinking, "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (Hebrews 13:14). To belong to a church meant that one's citizenship is no longer on earth (in an earthly city); it is rather in heaven (in the Kingdom of God). Although God's reign had come into their midst, they still awaited it in its fullness (Driver 1997:61). They were all pilgrims.

As shown above, there are many reasons for pilgrims, but they share one thing in common. Their moving is to achieve God's will through human life journeys. Abraham finally became the prototype of faith through his pilgrimage; Moses received God's commandment and set up Israel's Yahweh faith during his moving; Paul provided the foundation of the world mission while he was moving. In light of this, we conclude that all moving Christians are pilgrims. There is no exception. God has purpose for every Christians, and it is not a matter of where he/she lives. The real matter is that God has a will for each of them, especially toward people who are on a pilgrimage. Here, if we see immigrants as pilgrims who are moving toward a godly purpose, what practical meaning does this have on their lives?

For immigrants, God is the Creator and Ruler. If Korean immigrant Christians identify themselves as pilgrims, they will be able to see God as the Creator and Ruler (Choi 1995:38) of their present life. Abraham, a pilgrim, met Melchizedek, and that mysterious man taught Abraham that God was the Creator of heaven and earth and in charge of the universe (Genesis 14:19-20). Therefore, all immigrants must know that they are living in God's territory no matter where they are. It does not matter if it is in Korea or North America. God's Providence is not limited to the human-made boundary of a nation. The author of Psalms sings, "In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land" (Psalm 95:4-5).

Many of my interviewees confirmed this point. Mr. Kim of Seattle said that he has lived in three countries: Saudi Arabia, Argentina, and the United States, and he has traveled to more than 50 countries. As a result, he feels that everywhere is the same to him. As one of the missional leaders, a human-made boundary of nations does not bother him. Everywhere is God's territory because He rules all nations.

God continues His creation work in human history and Christians are co-workers to join divine creative work in this world. If Korean immigrant Christians recognize strongly that their God is the Creator and the Ruler, they can be positive about living even in a foreign country. For this reason, Jeremiah's proclamation of God's word to the Israelites was not for sorrow and rejection. Instead, it was to encourage them about their new land. "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and

daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile” (Jeremiah 29:4-7).

Therefore, it is crucial for pilgrims to believe that anywhere in the world is God’s territory. When they have this faith, then they can have a mission to love and develop God’s world. It means they would become main characters in God’s history wherever they are. That is the way to understand Jacob’s two blessings to Pharaoh (Choi 1995:39). He was a simple new immigrant who escaped famine in Canaan, but he bravely blessed Pharaoh of Egypt because he understood his identity as a pilgrim. Actually, he answered Pharaoh’s question, “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers” (Genesis 47:9). Jacob saw life as a pilgrimage under God’s providence. God should be understood as the Creator and Ruler of the world.

For immigrants, History is moving towards God’s Promise. Secondly, if Korean immigrant Christians perceive that they are pilgrims under God’s reign, they come to realize that they are directed to the clear promise of God (Choi 1995:39). God’s promise is reliable, and they are moving toward that promise through their pilgrimage. In Hebrews 11:8-10, we can affirm that Abraham’s moving was to God’s promise. And the author of Hebrews calls that movement “faith.” At the same time, the Hebrews writer points out that Abraham’s pilgrimage was toward the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. There is a clear direction and destination. We also see that, after Abraham, the history of the Old Testament unfolded God’s promise of place as Canaan, the “Promised Land.” Moses and all Israel left Egypt, seeking “the Promised Land.” In the period of exile, Israelites equated the recovery of Jerusalem as God’s promise. For them, the recovery of Jerusalem meant the achievement of God’s

promise.

The writer of Hebrews describe Christian life as, “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13). With this, Korean immigrants Christians should recognize that they are pilgrims moving towards God’s promise. They should not focus on where they came from or where they will return. Instead, they are to long for a better country - a heavenly one. For immigrants, the history and their lives are moving toward God’s promise.

For immigrants, Life is guided by the Holy Spirit. When Korean immigrant Christians understand their life as a holy pilgrimage, they can now see that the Holy Spirit is guiding their lives (Choi 1995:41). The writer of Acts describes the atmosphere of the early Christians’ moving, “Those who had been scattered (because of the persecution following Stephen’s martyrdom) preached the Word wherever they went” (Acts 8:4). From the beginning, the church used its “scattering” for spreading the Good News under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

As a pilgrim, Jesus also came from heaven into human history. When he stayed in history, he kept moving for his ministry. He moved back to heaven but will come again. As we see, all of his life was filled with this pilgrim motif. But that is not all. After resurrection, when he gave the Great Commission to the church, he assumed that his workers would have similar pilgrimage life styles. And there was a combination of this pilgrimage mode and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

For Korean immigrant Christians, therefore, the image of a pilgrim can explain their moving and living motif in North America. Once they remember that they are pilgrims of God, it will engender as a new discovery of their self-identity. For them, God is still the Creator and Ruler wherever they are, they are moving toward God's promise, and they are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are about the first biblical images of Korean immigrant Christians-pilgrim.

Korean Immigrant Christians' Context as Margin

The second biblical theme that I deal with for Korean immigrant Christians is the matter of their new context, margin. The place, margin, is fairly understood only when it is dealt alongside the concept of "center." Without the center there is no margin; just as there is no center without a margin. They are mutually relative and co-existent (Jung Young Lee 1995:30). However, people tend to focus only on the center and, therefore, the center so often becomes the framework to perceive the world and even to develop theology.

For this reason, I believe that the dominant theology emanates from the lens of the center; therefore, it misses so many things that are important in the Scripture because it neglects the lens of the margin. "When the Bible is read from the social location of those whom society privileges, the risk exists that interpretations designed to protect their power and privilege are subconsciously or consciously constructed" (De La Torre 2002:4). This tendency reminds us that people forget that Christianity did not start as a dominant "Christendom." In fact, the original nature of Christianity was marginal, but people forgot this original nature of Christianity after becoming a "majority" after Constantine (AD 313).

Here, I believe that Korean immigrant theology can contribute to the realm of

theology by providing and emphasizing the lens of the margin. Actually, in the Bible, there are lots of important insights that we easily neglect when training the lens only upon the center. In other words, the margin also is the place of God's blessing in spite of its special alienation, and I believe that Korean immigrant Christians should discover this fact for their context-identity.

For immigrants, the Margin is the Place of God's Calling. In the view of Korean immigrants, the history of biblical patriarchs is the history of marginality. Since they are pilgrims, they always experience marginality. However, through such experiences, all of them reach their self-consciousness as God's pilgrims and discover God's calling. For Abraham, the marginal wilderness meant God's calling and its achievement. When God called Jacob, the same principle could be applied. Even when Jacob slept alone in a marginal place, God gave him a new vision through a dream (Genesis 28:10-20).

Another representative figure of this truth is Moses. In fact, Moses typifies a marginalized person. He was born into a slave family. Even though he had a chance to live as a member of the majority in the palace, he chose to re-embrace marginality, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Hebrews 11:24-25). One day, a marginalized place became the land of God's calling. In fact, when God called him, Moses was at the extreme margin, the wilderness (Exodus 3:1-12). Yet, God said, "The place where you are standing is holy ground." Whenever and wherever God is, that time and place is holy and meaningful. Surely God's calling was there despite, or even, perhaps because of, the midst of the margin.

Several Judges were called when they were in the margin as well. Jephthah was

an illegitimate child from a prostitute and lived with marginalized people. “They said, ‘because you are the son of another woman.’ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a group of adventurers gathered around him and followed him” (Judges 10:2-3). Gideon was also a weak man (Judges 6:15), and Deborah was a woman (Judges 4:4) who was usually neglected in the Israel community.

No exception to marginal identity is found in the story of prophets. Almost all of them were standing on the margins of Israel society to proclaim the need to repent to the majority of Israel. Some of them were forced to become immigrants through captivity. However, we can still find a positive message of God, such as Jeremiah chapter 29 as mentioned above. There is also hope such as the Messiah (Isaiah 53). As we see, the place of margin in the Old Testament is not just a place of alienation. Rather, it is a place where God’s history was achieved through the people of God. Therefore, it is not a place of cursing but a place of blessing, if when perceived through the lens of marginality.

For Korean immigrants, the marginal place should be transformed from an isolated land to a blessed land where God’s calling exists. It is because of God’s existence with them. As Jacob proclaimed the wilderness to be the house of God and gate of heaven (Genesis 28:16), it does not matter where immigrants are. Instead, what matters is if God is with them and if He calls them. The marginal place cannot silence God’s call.

For immigrants, the Margin is the Place of God’s Training. The second implication of the margin for Korean immigrant Christians is that it is the locus of God’s training. The Bible teaches that the marginal wilderness often has been the classroom for God’s people (Choi 1995:46). Through the experience in the wilderness,

Israelites became the people of God. They experienced the mysterious crossing of the Red Sea, received the Law, struggled with starvation and thirst, and attained God-provided space in the Promised Land. What God intended for Israel through the time in the wilderness was their individual and corporate life transformation to reflect God's characteristics (Dyrness 1998:64). Therefore, God trained them in the margin.

Almost all of the godly people in the Scripture had to traverse the wilderness before doing God's work. David had to experience the wilderness; Daniel did as well; and, for Jonah, it was the same. Before doing his work, Jesus sojourned in to the wilderness for forty days in preparation for his ministry (Matthew 4:1-11). Even Paul had a similar experience in Arabia. For this reason, the marginal wilderness can be claimed as a blessing of God for Korean immigrants.

Mr. Lee of Toronto had struggled with many social and economic difficulties. Of course there had also been severe relational struggles at his job with fellow workers. However, he had endured those difficulties with faith, and now he confesses that all had been God's training for him. Now everything that he has experienced nurtures his mature Christian life including serving as an active member of the mission department. Another fine example is Mr. Kang of Vancouver, who was preparing to serve as a missionary. Throughout his marginal-related struggles in Canada as an earlier Korean immigrant, he has experienced discrimination by fellow workers and other career issues. Despite such difficulties, he confessed that God has trained him to serve as a missionary.

When a new immigrant enters into a new country, he/she will encounter numerous conflicts from the new context, which is novel for them. However, such experience is very similar to that of Israel's marginal experience. And if he/she

interprets that experience as God's training field, then their new context becomes a place of God's blessing.

For immigrants, the Margin is the Place of New Beginning. The last implication is that the marginal place for Korean immigrant Christians is the land of the new beginning. As with Moses and Israel's exodus, the wilderness so often implies a new beginning. When a discouraged Elijah ran into wilderness, he encountered God through a gentle whisper and was recovered by God (1 Kings 19:1-18). Thus, we can see the margin as the place where Elijah was healed and prepared for his new journey. As mentioned, Jesus began his ministry in the wilderness. The same was true for Paul. He witnessed that he did not go to Jerusalem but Arabia (Galatians 1:17) right after encountering Jesus. Therefore, for Paul, the wilderness was actually the place of a new beginning. Among the Diasporas of the early Christians, Philip, who was scattered, preached the word of the Lord (Act 8:4), and one day God asked, "Go south to the road-the desert road-that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (Act 8:26). When he obeyed, he met and led an Ethiopian eunuch to believe in Jesus. In fact, this event marked a new beginning of the Gentile mission.

However, the most exciting beginning we encounter in the Bible is the story of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. "He appeared in a body" (1 Timothy 3:16). From an immigrant's perspective, Jesus was also an immigrant, who came into the world as its Savior. The writer of Philippians addresses the nature of this event, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus, who is God in a body, became a marginalized person and appeared among marginalized sinners. Therefore, Jesus' birth is clearly a typical

beginning event. The books of Matthew and Mark emphasize that the Son of God was born in the smallest town, Bethlehem, as he was neglected by the majority of Israel. Later, that humble manger marked a place of new beginning. Jesus also began his ministry not from Jerusalem but from the margin as did John the Baptist. The fact that God also stood on the margin and transformed that place to a new history of salvation is very persuasive for all immigrant Christians.

Among my interviewees, there were three new converts who became Christians after their immigrations. They commonly confirmed that immigration for them meant a new beginning. It did not simply imply their spiritual new beginning but also their social and relational beginnings. For example, Mr. Choi of Seattle received God's calling in the midst of his severe relational, emotional, and economical failure. Mrs. Koo had been seriously struggling with the issue of meaning of life. In Korea, she had everything such as beauty, money, social position, comfortable family; however, she began to question, "So what?" Fortunately, God called her in the place of margin. She confessed that her life was heading toward God's will and vision.

To sum up, these three main thoughts provide us with a positive understanding of the marginal experience in spite of its suffering, loneliness, and alienation. For God's people, not only their original country but also their new country is an arena of God's history. All human beings, all material worlds, and all history are found to be sacred before God (Senior and Stuhlmueller 1983:326). Korean immigrant Christians, therefore, should transform their negative concept of "being marginal" despite its legitimate painful experiences. For God, every place is meaningful. In the marginal wilderness, God gives them a new calling, God trains his people, and God gifts his people with a new beginning. Therefore, margin is the place where a new creative

power of the immigrant can be expressed.

Korean Immigrant Christians' Role as *Shalom*

Now, let's consider the issue of *shalom* in the context of Korean immigrant Christians as their new task. *Shalom* is God's original plan. This means more than the absence of conflict and immensely more than inner peace or peace of mind. Rather, *shalom* carries the sense of harmony, right relationship and the proper functioning of all elements in the environment (Snyder 2002:19).

For Korean immigrant Christians, this issue of *shalom* is very practical, because they have consciously or unconsciously developed this skill to make *shalom* in their actual life's context. When new immigrants come into North America, they have to let the East meet the West and have to harmonize their worldview with the Western worldview. And this is also a special characteristic of an immigrant's existence in alien place, because this collision of cultures can engender potential for new creativity. This is the place where an "either/or" worldview is overcome by a "both/and" worldview and where "in-betweenness" becomes an alternative way to exist. In other words, bringing *shalom* in all dimensions of life should be Korean immigrant Christians' new task. What meaning does this have on the practical lives of the Korean immigrant Christians?

For immigrants, their Task is to bring *Shalom* among Ethnicities. First of all, it means immigrants should create *shalom* among ethnicities through their existence. As we see, there has clearly been ugly racism in North America as in all other places, and Korean immigrants have had to confront and deal with it. Then where can we find the model of *shalom* among the ethnicities in the Bible? In the book of Jonah, we see an extremely ethnocentric person (Choi 1995:48). Even though we do not see whether

Jonah finally changed his ethnocentric attitude or not, we can learn many positive scenes regarding *shalom* among ethnicities. For example, in Jonah's boat, there were many Gentiles who were ethnically and religiously different. And we see their gentle attitude toward Jonah and their international cooperation to overcome their problems (Jonah 1:11-13). In particular, in the last part of the book, we can clearly confirm that God really wanted to include other ethnicities in his salvific history.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist proclaimed to the ethnocentric Jewish people that God could raise up children for Abraham even out of the stones (Matthew 3:9). Paul, who did mission among many cultures, said, "There is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him" (Romans 10:12). Even the genealogy of Jesus in the book of Matthew, which was written mainly for the Jews, set forth Gentile women as mothers of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-5). Therefore, Korean immigrant Christians, who have experienced racism and discrimination, should keep and practice *shalom* mentality evident in the biblical teaching.

Among my interviewees, Young Nak church of Toronto, Ken-bit church of Toronto, and Sarang community church of Los Angeles have clearly viewed and responded that they have already been in this multiethnic community. And they have noticed that God let them be in the middle of more than 160 ethnicities communities and tried to keep the balance between local and global. These churches have already tried to keep an intimate relationship with these ethnic communities through cooperative ministry, supporting their new ethnic churches, and providing scholarship for other ethnic groups. These efforts seemed to work well.

I believe that racism among White, Yellow, Red, Brown, and Black is one of the

biggest problems in North America. And it is the responsibility of all Christians regardless of their ethnicity, to bring *shalom* into the community of North America. All ethnicities are the people of God, and God loves and cares for all of them. Woodley, a mixed-blood Keetoowah Cherokee, asks an interesting question, “What is God’s purpose to bring lots of immigrants into North America?” One of his answers is “synergy,” knowing God through a better perspective, seeing God through the eyes of another, and getting the bigger picture of our God (Woodley 2001:188). He is right. It is clear that we all need each other. The early church is the prototype of a multiethnic community, and this is also the heavenly form (Revelation 7). There is no place for racism in God’s Kingdom. And immigrant Christians who stand on the margin should take the initiative to be active because this is a very familiar experience.

For immigrants, their Task is to bring *Shalom* among Cultures. The next practical meaning of *shalom* for Korean immigrant Christians is that the immigrants have the responsibility to bring this *shalom* amongst cultures. One biblical example is shown in the story of Daniel of the Old Testament (Choi 1995:49). Many young Jewish elites were forced to move from the land of Israel to the Babylon Empire. Suddenly these four Jewish young men became marginal. Moreover, the Emperor wanted these young Jews to be assimilated into the culture of Babylonia. They had to learn the language, change their names, wear Babylonian cloth, and study Babylonian curriculum.

However, Daniel and his three friends did not give up their Jewish culture while they lived within the Babylonian culture. The refusal of Babylonian food (Daniel 1:8-16) represented this issue well. In their dialogue and behavior, we can see how they reacted between two cultures. They knew where they should stop to preserve their special cultural identity, but it did not mean they refused all aspects of Babylonian

culture. They certainly discerned what they should keep and what they should change carefully. Actually, they combined the two cultures and became creative. The continuing success of Daniel in the midst of a shift of empires was the clear proof of this *shalom* principle among cultures.

America once espoused a melting pot cultural policy while Canada used the metaphor of mosaic. Whatever the policy is, immigrants should be the agent of *shalom* among cultures. A poem of Joanne Miyamoto, a Japanese-American, representatively illustrates well the predicament of this conflict among cultures in the following poem:

When I was young / Kids used to ask me / what are you? / I'd tell them
 what my mom told me / I'm an American / Chin chin Chinaman / You're a
 Jap! / Flashing hot inside / I'd go home / My mom would say / Don't
 worry / He who walks alone / Walks faster
 People kept asking me / what are you? / and I would always answer / I'm
 an American / they'd say / no, what nationality / but there was always
 someone asking me / what are you?
 Now I answer / I'm an Asian / and they say / why do you want to separate
 yourselves / now I say I'm Japanese / and they say / don't you know this is the
 greatest country in the world / now I say in America / I'm part of the third world
 people / and they say / if you don't like it here / why don't you go back. (Tachiki
 1971:98-99)

This is just a part of immigrants' struggles among cultures, and they have to overcome this difficulty through seeking harmony among them. Here, I believe that the "either/or" perspective should be replaced by the "both/and" perspective. The Western worldview of dualism should be overcome by, and through, immigrants' cultural struggling. Immigrants have to bring *shalom* into cultural conflicts through their very existence and their work.

This is optimized in Jung Young Lee's dream of a garden where all plants grow together. He says, "A park I often visit symbolizes the new life. In the park different plants of all shapes and colors grow together: dandelions, lilies, wild roses, daisies,

trees, and bushes. They seem to live harmoniously, having their own places in the park” (Jung Young Lee 1995:170). Achieving harmony among cultures is one of the main tasks of Korean immigrant Christians, and the bottom line of this belief is that we believe God gives us “cultural creativity.” This matter will be expounded more in Chapter 5.

For immigrants, their task is bringing *shalom* among conflicts. The last implication of *shalom* for Korean immigrant Christians is about conflicts. There are many kinds of conflicts in North America such as the conflict between the rich and the poor, between the Black and the White, and between the majority and marginality. And the experience of Korean immigrants can contribute to harmonization of these conflicts. In the book of Ruth, we read the representative *shalom* that Ruth accomplished between the rich and the poor, and between the Jew and the Moabite, and between majority and marginality.

In the early churches of Jerusalem or Antioch, we can see how early churches brought *shalom* to the conflicts between the rich and the poor, between a Jew and a Gentile, and between men and women (Act 6, 13). These biblical models are the prototypes of our *shalom* among conflicts. Preaching the message of *shalom* has been an effective weapon of the church. With their experience and know-how of harmony, immigrant Christians should try to be at peace with God, reconciled with people, and harmonized with all of God’s creation (Snyder 2004:133). Bringing *shalom* into the place where conflict occurs is one of the tasks of Korean immigrant Christians.

One of the important issues for the Korean immigrant community has been the conflict between the first and second immigrant generation. Hertig addresses this conflict well:

When the first generation parents' old assumptions emerge to the surface they collide with children's Americanized values. To their disappointment, many parents find they become culturally remote from their children as the children assimilate to American values through formal education. Yet, locked into the old Korean values like a security blanket, the parents are prevented from entering into the world of their children. Against this wall of differing worldview, the new generation, mostly educated in America, juggles their daily routine in interstitial space. Hence, a tug-of-war between the generations is inevitable. (Hertig 2001:43)

Therefore, Korean immigrant churches have to take a leading role to reduce the conflicts between the two generations. For that, they have to develop a second-generation ministry system, which can be responsible for the future generation. That system has to be culturally relevant to the second generation, and simultaneously closely related to their parents' church structure.

They also have to use their mission field as the place to solve this generational conflict. Rev. Lim of Toronto shared their experience about this. When they went to the mission field in Central Asia, all generations went together. There each generation could watch another generation's devotion and passion, and they came to love each other. Then, the younger generation came to admire the older generations' devotional service, and they finally gathered together and decided not to make another church because of this generational gap. They decided by themselves. They realized that they need each other. *Shalom* means perfect harmony. Therefore, the task of Korean immigrant Christians in North America includes fostering *shalom* between the first and the second generation.

Another issue is the aforementioned ethnic conflict. Actually, many Korean churches held a united worship service as a *shalom* practice after the Los Angeles riot of 1992. Another ethnic group, the African-American community, and the Korean-American community in L.A. came to learn the importance of *shalom* through their

mutual painful experiences. Conflict between them resulted in deep scars and valuable learning in their histories.

As we can see, *shalom* should be perceived as a vital task for Korean immigrant churches toward ethnicities, cultures, and conflicts. However, we should go a bit further because we know that there is God's master plan for the world. Under God's reconciling plan (Colossians 1:20), the church's mission is bringing all things and all people on earth under the dominion and headship of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:10-11).

This is why the Korean church should not stop where they are located. Instead, they must move toward the world as God's dynamic Kingdom agency (Snyder 2004:68). The letter of Peter to the Jewish *Diaspora* clearly affirms that God's purpose for them was "that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore, *shalom* between the lost and God must be a priority for Korean immigrant Christians. This fact naturally turns our attention toward world mission.

Summary of Key Learnings

This chapter discussed Korean immigrant Christians and the Scripture, employing several theological theories and framework, such as the grounded theory, the Synthetic model of Bevan's contextual theology, two steps of Critical Contextualization (the phenomenological analysis and the ontological reflection), and two theological lens (marginality and pilgrimage).

What does the Scripture mean to Korean immigrant Christians? What biblical truths are relevant for them? For discussing those, moving, and being marginal concept had been explained. Then I chose three biblical images of pilgrim, margin, and *shalom*

for a deeper discussion about biblical meaning of being an immigrant, meaning of a new context, and meaning of their new task. Through my own journey as a Korean immigrant Christian and a church leader, biblical understanding of these three issues has been very essential because it can provide the ultimate life meaning as an immigrant.

The Scripture consists of many important frameworks of moving and being marginal. And calling to be *Diaspora* contains God's salvific will. In terms of Korean immigrant Christians' self-identity, identifying themselves as pilgrim is quite beneficial. If so, God for Korean immigrants is understood as the Creator and Ruler. Wherever they go, they perceive God's reign is on their lives. At the same time, they can understand that history including their immigration is moving toward God's promise. Then their moving to the new country becomes more meaningful. Furthermore, they regard their new lives in North America as being under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For the positive perception of Korean immigrant Christians' context, positive interpretation of their new context is imperative. In order to acquire this positive interpretation, I chose the image of margin. Even though the normal concept of margin is being passive and victimized, the biblical concept of margin is very positive. First of all, margin is the place of God's calling. There Korean immigrants attain God's calling for a new life and purpose. Margin is also very positive place for Korean immigrants because it is the place where God trains them. With this perception, all of struggles in their new context would be transformed as God's training. Moreover, bringing *shalom* is their new task among ethnicities, cultures and generations, and conflicts.

However, we must remember that *shalom* also has the spiritual dimension between God and human. As a unique group of immigrants who had been spreading

Christianity around the world, Korean immigrant Christians have to take an important role for the world mission. I will discuss this aspect more in Chapter 6.

As addressed, this biblical reinterpretation about Korean immigrant Christians' new self, new context, and new task had brought me "Identity Transformation." Naturally, this experience had rapidly changed my passive and victimized life's attitude to a very positive one. This phenomenon has also taken place in my ministry setting. Whenever I preach or teach these biblical themes regardless of the place, I have watched lots of identity transformation among the congregation.

This has also been confirmed in my interview process. There I have watched many pastors and missional leaders who have had a similar experience. Even though their stages of transformation vary, discovering who they are, where they are, and what they must do as Korean immigrant Christians have transformed their being and their view on world mission. Therefore, articulating this relevant biblical truth for Korean immigrant Christians is imperative.

Chapter 5

Korean Immigrant Christians and Self-Identity

In this chapter, I will discuss Korean immigrant Christians and their self-identity. As we discussed in chapter four, a relevant biblical reflection and interpretation about their immigrant situation may provide a positive and dynamic self-identity for Korean immigrant Christians. In my interviews, I have discovered that the missional senior pastors have actually emphasized this positive identity transformation of Korean immigrant Christians when they carry out their ministry. Their ministry of emphasizing this positive identity is naturally stimulating to congregations' meaning of life as immigrants and this leads to their active missional involvement for the world mission.

Throughout the interviews, I especially realized that they shared a few common terminologies including, Korean immigrant under God's Providence, American dream and Kingdom dream, poor situations of an ethnic minority group and their potential, their perception regarding marginality and ethnicities. I will discuss these issues in the rest of the chapter using the interview materials and library research.

Major Concepts and Issues

Several important concepts and issues regarding self-identity have emerged from the interviews as follows.

Self-consciousness under God's Providence

The most obvious finding in the interviews is that the majority of interviewees understood their immigration in relation to God's Providence. Almost all mentioned the name of Abraham to explain their life's situation, and then emphasized the word, "God's Providence." For example, Rev. Kwon of Seattle viewed his immigrant life as

God's calling. As God called Abraham to the new land, Rev. Kwon understood God called him as an immigrant as a blessing to the new land. Rev. Jung and Rev. Paik of Toronto also understood their lives in the new land were under God's Providence. Both had experienced many difficulties in their new land, and through that process, they came to realized God's calling for ministry, especially for mission.

Such confession was not limited only to the pastors. Almost all of the new converts like Mrs. Koo of Vancouver, Mr. Choi from Seattle, and Mr. Lee of Toronto, who became Christians after their immigration, commonly confessed that they understood their immigration as God's Providence. Just like the lives of many biblical figures discussed in chapter four, they became God's people through their immigrant experience. Even missionaries from their immigrant context shared the same view. Mr. Choi of Houston, Mr. Shin of Los Angeles, Mr. Kang of Vancouver, and Mrs. Jung of Seattle, admitted that their immigrant lives had been under God's Providence. Regardless of the categories, almost all the interviewees confirmed this fact that their immigration had taken place under God's Providence.

What I discovered is that their active involvement in mission was closely related to their perception of self-identity as one under God's Providence. In other words, Korean immigrant Christians' self identity as being under God's Providence impacts their positive response to their immigrant life and active involvement in mission. Therefore, understanding his or her immigrant self in relation to God is imperative for Korean immigrant Christians. This should not only be applied to individuals. Rather, when we approach Korean immigrant history, we have to consider God's Providence to the country as well.

As we discussed in chapter two, the concept of immigration had been very rare in

Korean history for more than five thousand years. However, the door to immigration opened in Korea during the last century. Interestingly, this Korean migration phenomenon had taken place right after receiving Christianity. In the 19th century, importation of the gospel seemed to give hope for Koreans who had been under political pressure of Japan. At that time, the gospel had spread rapidly throughout the country. There were several huge revival movements around the country including the Wonsan Revival in 1903 and the Pyongyang Revival in 1907.

Naturally, Korean Christians had expected God's salvific rescue from their national sufferings by Japanese oppression. As Jesus' followers expected the restoration of Israel from Roman Empire (Acts 1:6), many Korean Christians had expected God's salvific movement for the nation. However, what they had actually experienced was the loss of the country for thirty six years by Japanese colonization (1910-1945). And there had been many painful stories during that period of time. People questioned what God had done during that period of time.

In the personal interview, missionary Min Young Jung, the Associate Director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, pointed out God's inconspicuousness toward Korean history. He perceived God's intention for Korean *Diaspora* into the world as Ralph Winter views that God spread His people out for accomplishment of the kingdom of God (Winter 2000:195-213). In history, if God's people had not voluntarily spread, God had spread them out by various means. It has clearly happened both individually and collectively.

As many of my interviewees have experienced, God let them individually become part of the *Diaspora* through diverse reasons such as study, job, and family issues. At the same time, God also let Koreans collectively become *Diaspora* through

political, economical, and sociological situations. Therefore, we have to see God's inconspicuousness for Korean immigrants who now live as the most widely dispersed people group in the 21st Century, and this phenomenon has been for the accomplishment of the kingdom of God.

Briefly, the period of Korean *Diaspora* began under the unbearable colonial period under Japan (the 19th Century) and later during the Korean War (1950-1953). Political reason, economic reason, and sociological reason accelerated Koreans' spreading around the world. Today, one tenth of Korean population lives outside of Korea as Korean *Diaspora*. Here, reflecting the Scripture, history, and our personal and communal experience, we can clearly see our self-identity under God's Providence. Many Korean immigrants left their country right after receiving the gospel, weeping due to many painful stories. However, God's original intention to use Korean *diaspora* for world mission through their immigration is evident to us today. There is clear Providence of God for Korean immigrants and understanding this gives us the historical and missional responsibility for accomplishing the kingdom of God.

Ultimate Purpose of Immigrants' lives: American/Canadian Dream Verse Kingdom Dream

The second important issue from the interview is the matter of ultimate purpose of Korean immigrant Christians. A unique commonness of these Korean missional church congregations was that they did not mention "American/Canadian Dream" but "Kingdom Dream." Usually, the terminology of "American/Canadian Dream" is well understood in the Korean immigrant community. Regardless of their reasons for immigration, achieving "American/Canadian Dream" was an important factor in taking risks of immigration. In fact, this has been the most important reason for enduring

myriads of difficulties in their foreign social context, and as a result, a huge house, expensive car, good business or professional position became the measuring rod of successful immigrant lives. Especially for parents, children's success with entering a brand name university and attaining professional jobs are very important because it speaks for one's success in life.

However, if a Korean immigrant Christian has kept a legitimate and relevant self-identity through "Identity Transformation," coming from the positive reflection and interpretation of the Scripture and history, his or her ultimate purpose of life is naturally changed.

In fact, Mrs. Koo of Vancouver had been a successful fashion designer in Korea before her immigration. Mr. Choi of Houston got his Ph.D. and is the principal vice president and CIO of a famous Gas company, and Mr. Kang of Vancouver has been a successful chemical engineer and a government employee in Canada. In other words, they all have accomplished their professional success either in Korea or in the United States/Canada. However, regardless of where they had accomplished these successes, their purpose in life has changed because they have achieved the biblical self-identity about their being of Korean immigrant Christians.

As the biblical figures have come to realize their identity and God's will for them, these interviewees have realized their ultimate life's goal as the accomplishment of the kingdom of God. For this reason, their lives have dramatically changed as a passionate Christian for the world mission and become actual missionaries who use their professional careers in their mission fields. Mrs. Koo now is a passionate missional supporter of the church, and Mr. Choi and Mr. Kang are actually preparing their missionary career in North Korea and Central Asia.

These are not the only cases. Many senior pastors have kept emphasizing the importance of this ultimate life's goal issue in their ministry. Rev. Kwon of Seattle said that he has consistently challenged his congregation through this issue of ultimate life's goal. "For what are you making that donut or sandwich so hard everyday? Why do you work so hard at that cleaner or small market?" When his church members encountered this challenge and responded honestly to the biblical teaching, Rev. Kwon asserted that their life's ultimate goal would dramatically change for the kingdom of God. Rev. Kim of Los Angeles, therefore, has made a clear slogan of, "From American Dream to Kingdom Dream."

This issue of meaning of life is not just for the first immigrant generation. Missionary Hyun Min Hong, a mission mobilizer of Wycliffe Bible Translators, explained his experiences in the process of working with second generation Koreans. He claimed that for the 2nd generation Koreans, "American/Canadian Dream" is not an issue at all. If life is just for Ivy League colleges and professional jobs as their parents have emphasized, there is no serious meaning of life for them because they had already achieved those. What they need is having the ultimate purpose and life's goal. Therefore, changing the view from American/Canadian Dream to Kingdom Dream really matters, and experiencing this identity transformation is very important for Korean immigrant Christians.

Three Theological Reflections regarding Korean Immigrant Christians' Existential Issues

Unfortunately, the general atmosphere of Korean immigrant community has not overcome their passive perspective toward themselves. Not many people have tried to consider this matter seriously. Instead, the majority of Korean immigrants keep using

the word “ethnic minority” to describe themselves and continue to strive for social upstream. In fact, many, including the church leaders, have had the upward tendency to search more power, higher position, and wider influence. Honestly, I have seldom met speakers or leaders who interpret their minority social position with optimism or creativity. Rather, majority of those leaders have continued to insist that Korean immigrants should expand our capability and take advantageous positions through moving upward to influence the world.

This is reasonable. People can effectively influence others if they get more power, higher positions, and more possessions. However, if we only follow that paradigm, Korean immigrant Christians would never overcome their minority or marginality related issues. Realistically speaking, due to their social context, they would never become the majority, and would never influence the wider community. In that case, Korean immigrant community would continue to be just a minority ethnic group forever, and they would never change the world.

Here we need to be pensive about our identity issues in order to discover another way to overcome this dilemma. Therefore, the following questions are very important for the positive identity cognition for Korean immigrant Christians: What is the meaning of my life as a Korean immigrant Christian? How should I respond to my existential issues as an ethnic minority person? How should I treat my painful experience here? Responding to these issues is very crucial for all Korean immigrant Christians. We need relevant answers.

However, there has not been enough theological response toward these questions in Korean immigrant community in spite of its 100-year immigrant history. Min points out this situation, “There had been no Korean-American theology systematically

addressing the needs of these communities until recent years when there began to appear promising attempts by Protestant theologians such as Jung Young Lee, Sang Hyun Lee, and Andrew Sung Park” (Min 1999:149). He is right. There have not been many Korean immigrant theologians who have given theological answers to Korean immigrant Christians.

I assume that this is because the earlier life of Korean immigrants had been severe enough; therefore, the earlier leaders had been too preoccupied to do “their doing theology in formal way.” The second reason for the lack of theological work for Korean immigrants may be because the majority of Korean theologians who had studied in North America had gone back to Korea to teach at seminaries or Universities. Many of them have chosen a relatively “high class” life in Korea such as “professor” or “teacher” instead of remaining in a foreign country as a minority theologian.

For this reason, a few Korean American theologians who have committed their life as the minority theologians are invaluable and their theological works are much more precious. After all, Korean Christian immigrants need theology for their life and faith response to God. Of course, there are numerous Korean American/Canadian scholars in varying academic fields, but there are not many theologians. Nevertheless, encountering their stories and theological responses is quite a delightful experience.

Sang Hyun Lee is a professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the Asian American Program at Princeton Theological Seminary. He had come to America for his education and has stayed in this country for more than 40 years. As a member of PCUSA, he has been avidly working through both theological and practical works for Asian and especially Korean immigrant church. He has written and edited various books and articles, including *Korean American Ministry* (1993) and *The Philosophical*

Theology of Jonathan Edwards (1988).

Jung Young Lee had been a professor at Drew University before he passed away. He had escaped from North Korea to South Korea, had left Korea to study in America, and had lived in America as a UMC church minister and a theological professor, struggling with marginality issues. And he discussed his issues through the books, *Marginality* (1995), *A Sermons to the Twelve* (1988), and *A Theology of Change* (1979).

Andrew Sung Park is a professor at United Theological Seminary. He also escaped from North Korea with his parents whose father had been a church minister both in Korea and America. After becoming an immigrant in America, he studied theology to serve a church but changed his career as a professor. He has published some books including *Racial Conflict and Healing* (1996) and *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (1993). Now let us look at these Korean immigrant theologians' faith reflection regarding their life's situation.

Sang Hyun Lee's Theology of Pilgrim. Sang Hyun Lee is one of pioneers who have struggled with these issues, and his writings have given us many meaningful insights for theologizing about being Korean immigrant Christian and church. In his articles, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality: Symbols and Context in Asian American Theology," and "Marginality as Forced Liminality: The Context of Asian American Christian Theology," Lee searches an answer for "How do we as Christians live in this bewildering predicament of in-between-ness and in face of the painful alienation in the American society? In other words, what is the Christian meaning of living one's whole life as a stranger in another country?" Therefore, it is a fine example of "Korean immigrant theology," which responds to his marginalized life

situation as a stranger from a different shore. His theology provides a useful framework to perceive our social status.

According to him, the context of Asian-American theology is “Marginality” as viewed through “Forced Liminality,” which consists of both “in-between-ness” and “non-acceptance” by the dominant group (Sang Hyun Lee 1999:3). A marginal person “is poised in psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his sound the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often ‘dominant’ over the other” (Stonequist 1937:8).

He studies Gennep and Turner’s *rite of passage* structure consisting of three stages: separation, *liminal* stage, and reincorporation, focusing on the creativity of *liminal* situation (in-between-ness) from the *rite of passage* structure as an essential part of the Asian-American experience. However, there is a unique characteristic of Asian-Americans’ *liminal* stage when we compare it with other (general) *rite of passage* structures. Usually, when people experience “separation” from the old structure and the second “*liminality*” stage, they tend to return to their original structure as mature beings that experience transformation by their *liminal* experience. However, in the case of Asian-Americans, there is no structure to return because of the host group’s “non-acceptance.” Therefore, they are trapped in the wilderness of in-between-ness and need to overcome this ironic situation. What they have experienced is that they are required to enter into the center of the American structure and function as a revitalizing element in that society. Unfortunately, this very American society which immigrants must enter refuses to accept them into their world and insists on keeping them on the edges.

Therefore, for Asian-Americans, *liminality* in such a situation is frustrated and

suppressed, and the people caught in it are deprived of completing the process of human becoming. Without a space of belonging and freedom, the creativity of Asian Americans' *liminality* cannot be expressed to its full potential. In such a predicament, the *liminal* land of in-between-ness can indeed turn into a place of humiliation, frustration, and hopelessness. That's why Lee defines this term "marginality" as "a forced and permanent liminality – an in-between-ness that is suppressed, frustrated and unfulfilled by barriers that are not in one's own control. Of course, there is a possibility to be creative but still it has been crying out for liberation" (5).

Here, he uses his faith-responses to overcome this forced marginality. He brings up and discusses two biblical symbols – pilgrimage and home – that are important in the Asian American theology. The first symbol is "Pilgrimage" (Sang Hyun Lee 2001:61). The image of a Christian believer as a pilgrim, who does not seek permanent settlement in any one place or idea but is always ready to leave the present situation, journeying toward a God-promised goal, has been important for the Asian American church. Lee insists that when Asian-Americans have "a sacred pilgrimage" concept of their leaving their mother country, their life as strangers and exiles can be meaningful. Through this, we can see how he has seriously struggled with his identity issue.

The second symbol is "home" (64). To be pilgrims and self-conscious strangers at the margins, then, leads Asian-Americans to an experience of *communitas* and solidarity. As all mortal humans, they need a hospitable structure for belonging. It means that they actually need a home, and the church should become the home, a community, as the "household of God" for them. Such a community would provide a supportive space where *liminal* people can dream and be creative in freedom. Such a place would be where Asian Americans are not judged for either being too "American"

or being too “Asian” but are accepted for what they are, namely, as an “in-between.” This church, in other words, is a place where people are willing and free to leave behind the existing social structure for a moment and become *liminal* to structure and, through *liminality*, experience genuine community and become open to newness. The church is a place where the people with their revitalized sense of community and creativity are ready to return to structure as catalysts for change.

Overall, Sang Hyun Lee borrows *rite of passage* structure from anthropology to perceive immigrants’ social status as *liminality*. From there, he emphasizes the important role of church for immigrants, providing Christian immigrants’ identity as “Pilgrim” and immigrant church’s role as “Home.” Through these concepts, he has tried to determine the legitimate self-identity of Korean immigrant Christian and church.

Jung Young Lee’s Theology of Marginality. The second theologian is Jung Young Lee. Through his book, *Marginality*, he is seeking the answer to the question, “What is the meaning of life as an ethnic minority in America?” Therefore, this book is his faithful and theological reflection regarding the issue of ‘living’ in the North America as a marginalized person. He starts his theologizing from his life context, an Asian in the margin of the North America.

He introduces and soon refuses the classical definition of marginality that emphasizes only the negative side of marginality such as alienation, rejection, and struggles, and so forth. According to him, this is a product of centrality, which has to be overcome ultimately. The central groups view this marginality as “in-between” paradigm. However, it has to be overcome by the new definition of marginality, which is brought from his new marginal perspective. The new one is related to “both/and” and

“in-beyond” approach, but it is totally new and creative because it is very “holistic.” He explains, “Just as “in-between” and “in-both” are one “in-beyond,” the margin and creative core are inseparable in new marginality” (Jung Young Lee 1995:61).

Therefore, the norm of new marginality becomes the harmony of difference, and through this paradigm, he can be both an American as well as an Asian. He says, “The new marginal person can be a reconciler and a wounded healer to the two-category system” (63). Through it, he refuses the paradigm of “either or” and “neither nor.” Instead, he combines both in a creative way, introducing his oriental philosophy, “ying/yang” paradigm. What he believes is that only through this new perspective, the marginal people can overcome the old paradigm, which has concentrated on only “centrality.”

He does not stop there. Instead, he goes further to reinterpret the main themes of traditional (the Western dominant) theology such as God, Jesus, Creation, the Fall, People of God, and the Church. All of these themes are dealt with in this book through his new marginality paradigm. The most impressive point for me is his last chapter regarding “creative transformation,” which emphasizes “overcoming Marginality through Marginality.” His main point is that overcoming all structural and personal marginal experiences comes from love and patience as Jesus overcame his through these. This way, to shake the traditional norm through the marginal strategy, then, stimulates and challenges the people of center to move down or toward the margin. Through it, his final vision is making a “Garden” where all different plants grow together in harmony. He insists:

When centralist people understand that the center they seek is not real,
they will be liberated from centrality and seek the creative center.
When this transformation happens, centrality changes to marginality,

and marginality changes to new marginality, and all people become marginal. Marginality is overcome through marginality, and all are marginal to God manifest in Jesus-Christ. When all of us are marginal, love becomes the norm of our lives, and service becomes the highest aspiration of our creativity. We then become servants to one another in love. (170)

Lee's theology is very practical for his Asian-American Christian community. It is really powerful because it provides Asian-Americans clear "self-identity," which is strongly needed today. What I believe is that the most severe struggle of immigrants is whether they have the meaning of life or not in a foreign land. Here, Lee's comment is insightful, "The ethnic minority churches, especially Korean-American churches, must rediscover or create their own identity as communities of marginalized people" (144).

Moreover, his view gives a new vision of harmony, which is the ultimate form of the kingdom of God. This harmony is the prototype form of the church (Acts 2) and form of the heavenly end time (Rev 7:9). God intended the Gospel for all race and nations when he created the world, and He gave us the variety of cultures to be used for His glory. Therefore, the context of the North America, as multi-cultural/ethnic situation is a wonderful chance to manifest this harmony.

Overall, Jung Young Lee's perspective toward the issue of marginality is a well-developed contextual theology. "What does it mean to be a marginalized person as an immigrant?" From the question, he newly defines the concept of marginality through his creative "in-beyond" paradigm, and that is fresh enough to challenge the traditional theology and give Asian-Americans the existential founding concept of their being and doing in North America.

Andrew Sung Park's Theology of Han. The book of theological reflection, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*,

comes out of Park's own painful family experience that has provided *Han*. Park asserts that "the deep agony of human agony has been a primary concern for my theological reflection ... my theological theme has been how to resolve the human suffering which wounds the heart of God" (Park 1993:8). For him, the concept of *Han*, a typical Korean traditional concept of wounded heart is the most important tool and material to do his theology.

Park addresses this concept of *Han* as the scar that is deeply rooted in the victims from the sin of those who have offended them, defining, "frustrated hope, the collapsed feeling of pain, letting go, resentful bitterness, and the wounded heart" (31). It can also be understood as "the critical wound of the heart generated by unjust psycho-somatic repression, as well as by social, political, economic, and cultural oppression" (10). What he insists is that this aspect of *Han* must be dealt with when we consider the matter of sin and salvation.

For example, Park views that the traditional Christian doctrine of sin has not been properly developed for it has focused on only the sinners, not the victims. Therefore, his purpose in this book is to demonstrate this shortcoming in the doctrine of sin and to suggest its complement through the notion of *Han*, in the hope of bringing forth a holistic vision of the salvation of both sinners and their victims (177).

He lists traditional doctrine of salvation as "freedom from death and error" according to the early Greek church, as "freedom from guilt and its outcomes" for the Roman Catholic Church, and as "freedom from the law and its anxiety - producing and condemning power" in classical Protestantism (99). However, he argues that these traditional views of salvation have been defined only from the perspective of sinners and has overlooked the victims of the sins of the world. Justification has the same

problem in the perspective of *Han*. It has focused on only the restoration of moral freedom to sinners, neglecting the victims (89). Naturally, the concept of salvation has also been distorted. The traditional view of salvation has meant the healing of sinners from the pain of guilt, fear, and death; but he insists that a genuine healing must be relational, with compassionate concern about the healing of the victims of sinners. Therefore, he defines salvation as not only as “freedom from sin” for sinners, but also as “freedom from *Han*” for the victims of sin as well.

That’s not all. He further expands this relational issue toward God Himself. “The cross is not only the symbol of God’s intention to save humanity, but also the symbol of God’s need for salvation. The cross of Jesus is a symbol of God’s crying for salvation (*Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani*), because God cannot save Godself. If salvation is relational, then one cannot save oneself. God needs salvation! This sounds ridiculous and blasphemous. But if we understand salvation from a holistic perspective, God yearns for salvation because God relates to human beings” (121). Therefore, it can be said that his theology, emphasizing relation among sinners, victims, and God seems to be very radical.

As a solution to this theological shortcoming of sin and salvation, Park suggests that a genuine solution can be achieved in the dialectic relation between sinners and their victims. He calls it “participatory dialectic,” explaining, “this dialectical salvation is the relational, dynamic, and affective interaction between sinners and their victims, and the cooperative efforts of the two to dissolve *Han* and sin” (101). Since he has a holistic view, the oppressors (sinners) cannot be saved unless the oppressed (victims) are saved or made whole, and vice versa. In other words, no one is fully saved until all are saved. Salvation is wholeness, and no one can actualize wholeness by him or

herself (101). The church, therefore, should consider this whole relational picture between sinners and victims.

Therefore, Park's theology of *Han* is very persuasive and well-applied to the people who have experienced these problems including immigrants, blacks, women, or even the Native Americans. Both the oppressors/sinners and oppressed/victims need to see the whole dimensions of sin and salvation for the genuine reconciliation. Jesus Christ came to the world to save sinners as well as victims of sin; therefore, this theologizing regarding "the Asian concept of *Han* and the Christian doctrine of sin" is very powerful and legitimate not only for Korean immigrants but also for every Christian around the world, who is searching for a holistic approach toward theology.

Legitimate and Relevance of These Theologies for Korean Immigrant Christians.

The study of these Korean immigrant theologians gives us many theological insights regarding Korean immigrant Christians' self-identity and their hidden potential that is located in their unique life context.

Most of all, these theologies are very appealing and relevant to Korean immigrant Christians through their autobiographical method. Since they have used their life experiences of Korean immigrants as a main source of theologizing, we can easily identify ourselves with their stories. For this reason, their important concepts such as pilgrim, home, marginality, and *Han*, have taken the role of a lens for us to view who we are and how to relate to the North American context. Through their theology, we can see us more clearly, and we can even see what others cannot see. Therefore, their theologies are very relevant for Korean immigrant Christians.

Another characteristic of these theologies is that they stem from their attempt to fulfill their existential need. Without having a clear answer for the meaning of life in

North America, they have never been satisfied with their lives. Therefore, their theologies are trying to answer the Korean immigrant Christians' existential need. As we see in their discussions regarding their self-identity, their attempts are very practical for Korean immigrant Christians.

Actually, their theologies provide new possibilities to identify Korean immigrant Christians. Comparing to the previous simple identification, "an ethnic minority," their new attempt to prescribe them as "God's pilgrim" or "creative marginality" gives us the new status and role in God's salvation history. These new ways to identify their self also produce an effective role in a bigger community.

If Korean immigrants view themselves as an ethnic minority group, they would keep their upward tendency. However, if they have their clear identity as new marginality, they would not follow what others seek. Rather, they would come to realize their new identity and seek what God desires. In that case, they do not care about the American/Canadian dream. For them, God's intention toward them is the most serious matter in their context. For this reason, these theologian's works have been very relevant for Korean immigrant Christians. Therefore, these should be further articulated and developed.

Perspective Toward their Ethnic Identity

Interestingly, the majority of the interviewees responded that they are Korean or Korean-American/Canadian. In chapter one, I explained that I employed Chang's bi-acculturation model (Figure 2, p. 20) to identify Korean immigrant Christians' assimilation issues and identity formation issues. Of course, this model is helpful to investigate the pattern of Korean immigrant Christians' assimilation. However, I came to realize that if we follow only this model, we can only conclude that I'm Korean or

I'm Korean-American/Canadian. In that case, this paradigm lets Korean immigrant Christians emphasize their ethnic solidarity. If they are the first immigrant generation, this is stronger than the younger generation. For the first immigrant generations, keeping their ethnic uniqueness is a common tendency. Naturally, conflicts between generations take place.

However, when we use Jung Young Lee's paradigm, consisting of "In-between," "both/and," and "In-beyond," we can have a more holistic approach. Historically, many Korean immigrant Christians have struggled with their ethnic and cultural identity issue under these "In-between" and "both/and" paradigms. Naturally, they have not been released from the anxiety of losing their ethnic and cultural uniqueness. In that case, they have to be Korean, and their kids have to be Korean, or at least to be Korean-American/Canadian.

However, this fear can be overcome when we employ Lee's third paradigm of "In-beyond." Then, our discussion of "In-between" or "both/and" can become the harmony of difference. Therefore, this paradigm lets us admit that there is something different than "either/or" and "both/and," and that something of "In-beyond" is a clear identity.

Personally, it is not easy for me to overcome my "In-between" or "both/and" paradigm as a first immigrant generation. However two revelations enabled me to overcome this fixed perspective. One is realizing the fact that culture is always floating. Therefore, there is no fixed Korean culture and ethnicity that is permanent. The other realization is that God has given us cultural creativity. Expanding the paradigm in terms of perceiving the positive identity, actually helps the Korean immigrant Christians. After all, almost all Godly workers in the Early Church had been the Cosmopolitans who had

the wider paradigm regarding this and could freely cross the cultures and ethnicities.

Summary of Key Learnings

This chapter discussed about Korean Immigrant Christians and Self-identity. In summary, I learned that the concept of Korean immigrant Christians' Self-consciousness under God's Providence is so important for discipling them. As we see in the case of interviewees, when they understand their immigrant life in the relation with God's Providence, they would have the new meaning of life and through it they become passionate Christians and mission-minded Christians. This change may come from a legitimate biblical teaching, a relevant history perception, and a well-developed theologizing.

In Chapter 3, we discussed various biblical concepts and elements in relation to immigrants. Those biblical teachings, therefore, can contribute to Korean immigrant Christians' new meaning of life. In particular, understanding their self-identity under God's Providence is so powerful that an individual or even a group can be transformed for the kingdom of God. In the light of the "Transcendental model of Contextual Theology," this is the moment of "the affective and cognitive operations in the self-transcending subject" (Bevans 2004:103). In fact, many of my interviewees confirmed this fact, and the senior pastors of the six missional immigrant churches have consciously or unconsciously emphasized this aspect as well.

Relevant historical perception is also helpful for this change. Even though Korean immigrants had not understood why God had suddenly spread them out in the last century right after they received the gospel, now we can see God had been inconspicuously preparing them as Korean *Diaspora* for the world mission. As 1 Peter

2:9 calls dispersed Jewish people as *Diaspora* and emphasized God's missional intention, Korean immigrant Christians must realize their new received identity through a relevant history perception.

Of course, these have not been well articulated up to now in Korean immigrant community, and that is why I am dealing with this issue through this dissertation. Korean immigrant Christians, therefore, must deepen this point of view. Their self-identity must be closely related to God's Providence. Then, positive self-understanding and active missional involvement can emerge.

This issue naturally leads us to the next issue of the ultimate goal of Korean immigrant Christians. Through the research, I have learned that the so called "American Dream," does not provide Korean immigrant Christians with ultimate satisfaction in life. Of course, the American dream has impact and is still impacting many Korean immigrants' daily lives; however, it is not the ultimate goal that gives Korean immigrant Christians the meaning of life. Biblically speaking, this is very obvious, but in the case of Korean immigrant Christians, it is not easy to comprehend.

During their immigrant experience, the American dream has consciously or unconsciously taken an important role in their devotional life style. However, with their economic abundance it has lost its previous attraction. In the case of the second generation Korean immigrants, this phenomenon is more obvious. Compared to their parents, the second generation has been blessed with material abundance. Therefore, the concept of the American dream, searching for better life, does not mean much for the younger generation and does not serve as their motivator. Only when they are given the ultimate goal of Kingdom dream, today's Korean immigrant Christians respond and experience Godly transformation.

More learning comes from the investigations of the three Korean immigrant theologians. There I learned a new way of prescribing the self-identity of Korean immigrants. Instead of searching the centrality or upward tendency, Korean immigrant Christians should stand where they are and prescribe their new self-identity. As Jung Young Lee asserted, if Korean immigrant Christians keep searching for the centrality, which has been formed by the Western worldview, there would be many kinds of conflicts and competitions. However, if they stop searching for centrality and positively interpret their marginal context as a creative place, they will no longer be the supporting performers. Rather, they will realize that they are the main characters of God's history. This is the moment of identity transformation.

As we discussed earlier, this identity transformation comes from the relevant biblical truth in terms of their immigration and marginality experience. For example, understanding Korean immigrant Christians as Godly pilgrims or creative marginality can maximize their undeveloped missional potential and responsibility, and this issue will be discussed more in the following chapter. Furthermore, this identity transformation can also stimulate other minority communities or even the people who has the concept of centrality. Consequently, the relevant biblical teaching regarding their immigrant life is the key to all this change.

Meanwhile, Korean immigrant Christians should keep a holistic and wider paradigm in terms of perspective on their identity than keeping a fixed one. Lee's "In-beyond" paradigm, therefore, can be a useful tool to bring Korean immigrant Christians the positive identity perception.

In conclusion, relevant biblical teaching, proper historical teaching, and a new paradigm to perceive their self may cause the positive identity transformation of

Korean immigrant Christians. This identity transformation will naturally guide them to strive for not only the “American/Canadian dream” but also the “Kingdom dream,” God’s ultimate concern. When Korean immigrant Christians reach at this point, their tremendous missional potential will be explored. Therefore, in the following chapter, we will discuss about Korean immigrant Christians and mission.

Chapter 6

Korean Immigrant Christians and Mission

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, relevant biblical interpretation and theological reflection about Korean immigration highlights the importance of an identity transformation, leads them to an acknowledgement of responsibility for a dynamic practice of world mission. Several important concepts and issues from the interviews regarding Korean immigrant Christians and their mission practice must also be considered. This chapter synthesizes the major learnings for mission that result from this research.

Major Concepts and Issues

Four issues are especially important here: missional ecclesiology, missional potential of Korean immigrant Christians, missional practices in the immigrant churches as culture, and missional leadership.

Missional Ecclesiology

My interviews confirmed the importance of missional ecclesiology. All of the relevant discussions and missional ministry in the case-study churches were found to be closely related to the ecclesiology of the church, especially of the senior pastor. Ecclesiology matters, because who we are as a church defines what we do in church ministry. If a Korean immigrant church maintains a missional ecclesiology, understanding mission as its nature, all its ministry will be organized and practiced according to that missional nature. If not, their missional ministry comes to be merely “a” ministry among many.

The importance of the senior pastor’s ecclesiology must be emphasized. He is the

key figure who shapes and leads the congregation. In the case of Korean immigrant churches, the role of the senior pastor is especially important because generally the senior pastor's power and influence are larger than in most Western churches. How the senior pastor understands church and mission largely determines the church's characteristics and ministry. In my personal interview, missionary Hong, a mission mobilizer for Wycliffe, noted that while the Western mission mobilizer approaches individual Christians and mobilizes them, a Korean mission mobilizer must approach the whole church community. This means that the mobilizer first has to approach and influence the senior pastor of the Korean church. Without the senior pastor's serious intention, that Korean church does not move well for mission.

My interviews showed that this is very true. All the senior pastors interviewed understood mission as the nature of their church. In other words, they had a missional ecclesiology. A fine example was Rev. Kwon of Seattle who regarded his church ministry itself as a mission. He actually stated that his church ministry was mission to all nations. Naturally, his ministry goal was transformation of his church to be missional, and all his concern was how to transform his congregation's human resources for world mission.

Another example was Rev. Song of Toronto. As a 1.5 generation immigrant, he got his Ph.D. in intercultural studies and served as a missionary in the Philippines. He suddenly became the senior pastor of a mega-church due to an abrupt leadership change during his sabbatical year. As a missionary, a missional ecclesiology has been very natural to him. Today, he is trying to maximize his church's missional power for the nations, and hoping to attain the goal of 50% of the church is budget employed for mission.

The reason it is important to have a missional ecclesiology is that it influences every church member and their ministry. My interviewees showed clearly the key role of the senior pastors' ecclesiology. It was communicated through sermons, decision-making processes, and planning for ministry. In a word, in a Korean immigrant church context, the senior pastor's missional ecclesiology is essential. It defines the church's shape and determines the church's ministry.

Here is an example from my own experience. I have been serving the Korean Church of Dallas, the oldest Korean church in Texas, since July of 2006. Due to my missional ministry and the refocusing of the church on mission, I was invited to describe my ministry experience under the topic of "Missional Ministry" in a mission forum hosted by *Mission Dallas* in November of 2007. There I shared my missional ministry experience, noting the rapid church growth and the expanding missional effort. After my presentation, a pastor assigned to respond and evaluate my presentation commended me and expressed how he had been very impressed by this successful ministry. But he said worried about my ministry because it had not kept a proper balance. *He meant that my ministry had too much inclination toward mission. For him, "missional ministry" differed from the so called "traditional ministry."* This story illustrates the significance of missional ecclesiology. For me, mission is the nature of the church. The church exists as mission. For some pastors, however, mission is just one of the many different ministries of the church.

All of my interviewees, however, maintained a missional ecclesiology, and they had experienced dynamic church vitality, rapid church growth, and abundant involvement in world mission. Missional ecclesiology really matters.

Missional Potential out of Immigrant Experience

The next discussion regarding Korean immigrant Christians and mission is the issue of missional potential. Throughout the research, especially using the phenomenological analysis of the Critical Contextualization and other frameworks and theological lens, such as *rite of passage* structure, marginality, pilgrimage, and *han*, I gradually came to see this more clearly, and now I can articulate our missional potential with the conviction. In a word, through their immigrant experience as marginality, Korean immigrant Christians have become “Cosmopolitans” who can freely cross the boundary of language, culture, and country.

Acquiring Another Language. Every interviewee did not hesitate to answer when I asked about the benefits of immigration for the world mission practice. First of all, they have acquired a different language that allows them to have more confidence in a new context. Even though it is not an easy process, many Korean immigrant Christians can communicate with different languages. In the case of Korean immigrant Christians in North America, they can have a very useful worldwide language, English. As Rev. Lim of Toronto pointed out, even English itself has been a very powerful mission tool nowadays. In fact, many of the short mission teams from his church have prepared an English teaching program for their mission field. That is one of the easiest projects for a short mission project.

Experiencing Another Culture. Secondly, Korean immigrants have already experienced crossing the cultural barrier. There have been lots of differences between Korea and the United States/Canada, and so they have already experienced diverse difficulties, trials and errors. Of course, these experiences are beneficial for them. As we see through Chang’s Biacculturation model (p. 20), experience of crossing a culture

expands our perspective toward other people and the world. We know that assimilating into a different culture is not easy to overcome. Cultural adjustment, therefore, is a necessary process for all cross-cultural missionaries. However, Korean immigrant Christians have already completed this training through their marginality experience.

Overcoming Ethnocentrism. As explained earlier, Koreans had seldom left their limited territory for more than five thousand years. Therefore, they had never been in a different cultural setting. This implies that most of Koreans had not had cross-cultural experience; therefore, they have been very narrow-minded and intolerant toward other cultures. In other words, Korean people have been extremely ethnocentric.

However, their ethnocentrism has been challenged when they began spreading to the world. Before, they had tended to neglect other races, but after their immigration, they came to realize that there were other wonderful and respectable cultures. Even in the context of North America, they have naturally encountered and communicated with so many ethnic groups and cultures. As we noticed what happened through Chang's Biacculturation model, now they open their eyes when they perceive another culture and the world. Actually, Young Nak, Ken Bit, and Sarang Church have already noticed their multi-ethnic context, and they have tried to reach those other ethnic groups' ministry through supporting financial and human resources.

Experiencing Leaving. Meanwhile, Mrs. Jung of Seattle interestingly pointed out another benefit that she took through her immigrant experience. She had always lived in the same town in Korea before her immigration. Therefore, it had been very scary for her to relocate, especially to a foreign country. However, after few years of living in the United States as a Korean immigrant, she realized that she could survive in a different country, and it gave her courage to obey God to serve as a missionary. She and

her husband were preparing to serve in Uzbekistan as a computer teacher. In her case, her personal experience of leaving her country helped her to leave again for missions.

Encountering Difficulty. Another missionary, Mr. Kang of Vancouver also confirmed the benefit of immigration for mission. Since he had been one of the earliest immigrants in the Vancouver area, he had had suffered much in every area of his life including work, school, raising his children, and so on. Racial discrimination had been prevalent when he came to Canada a long time ago. In fact, I could see that it had been very difficult to endure as one of the earliest immigrants. However, these marginality experiences have been beneficial especially because he has prepared to serve as a missionary after his retirement.

What he realized was that because of his severe life experience in his *liminal* stage (p. 23) as an immigrant, he had kept a strong confidence, thinking that he can overcome any difficulties in the mission field because he has already experienced adjusting and living in another country. Both his marginality and *liminality* experience had influenced him to be a missionary.

Different Passport and Financial Capability. Furthermore, Korean-American/Canadian missionaries have different passports than Korean missionaries. Both American passport and Canadian passport enable Korean immigrant missionaries to go into places where Korean missionaries cannot go with just a Korean passport. Relatively higher financial capability can also be a benefit of Korean immigrant Christians to do their mission.

Other Benefits. There have been many similar stories regarding these beneficial experiences for mission in every interviewee's life. Surely, their immigrant and marginality experience have been helpful for practicing their mission work. Mr. Kwon

of Houston mentioned that Korean immigrant missionary can go easily into places where Caucasian missionaries are not welcomed. This is a reality. In many mission fields, native people prefer Korean missionaries than Caucasian missionaries simply because of their bad memories about ethnocentric Caucasian missionaries. This does not mean that all Korean immigrant missionaries are well trained from their ethnocentric attitude. Rather, their outlook may result in easier adjustment to those places and their cross-cultural adjusting experience can reduce the time of adjustment.

Meanwhile, this situation of Korean immigrant Christians reminds me of Jewish *Diaspora* around the world before Jesus' birth. One of the literatures of the intertestamental period, the book of Tobit says that Israelites had come to acquire their mission-mindedness through their physical *Diaspora* situation. "Confess him before the Gentiles, ye children of Israel: for he hath scattered us among them. There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: for he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever" (Tobit 13:3-4). De Ridder's view toward Jewish Diaspora is also insightful.

And as their roots sank deeper into the soil of their new homelands, they felt the need of speaking, praying, reading in the languages of the people of these lands. They were not against having God speak to others besides themselves and may even have welcomed and encouraged this . . . what is important is that the Jews were not adverse to making known the Word of God by word of mouth in the vernacular tongues but actually felt it their duty to do so. (De Ridder 1975:86)

As discussed, God had transformed the most ethnocentric Korean people to open to the world through their migration. Due to their immigrant experiences, Korean immigrant Christians have become the "Cosmopolitans." Today, they consciously or unconsciously have wonderful missional resources that have been formed through their immigrant experience.

Missional Practice as Church Culture

Using these resources, Korean immigrant Christians could have active missional involvement. The churches that I have visited for research are the representative examples. There I found some useful ministry strategies that other Korean immigrant churches should take and learn. Careful learning and contextualizing of these strategies would be beneficial for reshaping each church to be missional.

Consistency of Contextualized Mission Policy. The first characteristic of these six churches is that they have had a continuous mission policy. All of the church members regardless of their position could explain that their church was heading to one direction, following a clear mission policy. For example, Seoul Baptist Church of Houston has contextualized their mission policy with their missional potential that has been accumulated through their house church experience. That church had actually set up a clear mission policy in 2004, titled *Strategic Plan for 2005-2014*. According to it, Seoul Baptist Church has the clear principles regarding how to carry on their mission for the following 10 years. In brief, they want to use their know-how of the house church ministry of the last 11 years as the resource and model of their following 10 years of mission.

Young Nak Church of Toronto also has its own mission policy. In terms of their policy, for example, that church had had prepared the policy preparation team for one year, and that team had studied their contextualized mission policy. From 1997, that church had formed the *Adaptation policy of a tribe* in Kyrgyzstan, and they have already sent out five families. Recently, they expanded their policy so that they could begin their ethnic ministries in the Toronto area. Since then, Young Nak Church has supported to plant new ethnic churches such as Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos churches.

Ken Bit Church of Toronto has the mission policy of the *Talent Mission* that tries to use all of the church members' resource according to their talent. Sarang Community Church of Los Angeles also has the policy of *Three Generation Mission* that focuses on combination of generations in the mission fields. And Grace Church of Vancouver also has its own mission principle regarding the unreached people group.

As discussed, the Korean immigrant missional churches have had their own mission policy and have continuously practiced their mission according to those policies. Here, these mission policies have been developed and verified by their own church members for a long time; therefore, those are the contextualized policies. In summary, we have to admit the importance of having a mission policy of the church. Without it, a Korean immigrant church would not keep practicing its own mission with consistency, and it should be the contextualized one that could fit well in the local church's uniqueness.

Consistency of Missional Education. The next issue is the one of mission education of the church. Throughout the interview, I realized that each church has maintained its own mission educational program. Even though those educational programs vary, their commonness was their consistency.

Some churches have developed their own mission educational program such as Ken Bit Church's short mission training program or personal evangelism class, and others like the Community Church of Seattle borrowed other mission organization's mission education program such as *Eagle Discipleship Training School* of YWAM or *Jonah Mission School* of Come Mission. Rev. Song of Toronto has been teaching his small groups under a class titled, *Rethinking Ecclesiology*, dealing with missional ecclesiology. And Sarang Community Church of Los Angeles, the most famous church

for discipling the laymen program, has trained people according to their gifts for mission. Again, these educational programs have been practiced as an important part of disciple training process of the church.

Therefore, we cannot help admitting that the Korean immigrant missional churches must prepare their mission educational program. Rev. Song's comment, "For the clear purpose and direction, we need to change. However, change without education means a suicide" is very insightful. Therefore, if a church really wants to experience the missional transformation, the church should prepare and keep practicing the missional education.

Effective Missional Structure. For the same reason, the effective missional structure of the church is necessary. What I realized was that all of the six churches have had their own unique structure in their ministry settings. Again, those structures had represented each church's uniqueness. This means that they had been contextualized and that they had searched effectiveness.

Seoul Baptist Church of Houston had had a very concentrated ministry structure for a long time, under the name of *House Church Ministry Center* because of its focus on house church ministry. However, when they prepared their new mission policy a few years ago, they provided another important ministry structure, named *Missions Ministry Center*. Naturally, all of their missional ministries had been carried on through this structure.

Similar structure has been developed in the case of Sarang Community Church of Los Angeles. According to their focused eleven ministries, that church has developed each professional department. In terms of mission, they prepared *Mission Developing Department*, and that structure has managed the ministries of short mission project,

support of missionary and organization, intercessory prayer project, ethnic minority ministry, Native people ministry, and relief ministry.

Likewise, Korean immigrant missional churches have developed their own and contextualized missional structures for carrying on the effective missional ministry. All structures have been formed through their own experience; therefore, they seemed to fit in well to each church situation. This may guarantee the effective ministry and maximized results.

Mission as Church Culture. Lastly, I would like to assert that, through all of these reasons, mission is not a ministry but culture of those churches. What I mean is that when anyone visits those churches and talks with any church members, one can feel that mission is very natural for the church or the church members. When I interviewed the people, I could feel that everyone, regardless of the positions such as pastors, elders, deacons, missionaries, or even new converts, was very natural about mission. The reason was that mission had already become their church culture.

Of course, this phenomenon is a result of the combined efforts of the previous discussions. However, it should be still emphasized that making mission be the church culture is essential if we intend a missional church. On every church founding anniversary, Grace Korean Church of Vancouver had held a mission feast, and they let their new church members determine the mission offering when they want to get the church membership. Sarang Community Church of Los Angeles had begun evangelizing gathering when they planted their church. Seoul Baptist Church of Houston has let their missionaries give their testimonies on almost every Wednesday worship service and practiced the matching program with each house church for their missionary financial support. Ken Bit Church of Toronto has been practicing personal

evangelism with its senior pastor every week and has never stopped sending out short term mission teams. Yong Nak Church of Toronto has kept encouraging its key leaders to go to the mission fields, so much so that an interviewee said that they had to go because of the church atmosphere. Many church's Sunday bulletins and printed materials have kept talking about mission. Even the church decorations or banners have symbolized mission. The examples are endless. In a word, all of the church members of these churches, mission is very natural because it has been their church culture for a long time. For them, missionaries are not strange, holy, or selected people and mission field is not a very far place. Rather, missionaries and mission fields are very close to home.

Missional Leadership

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the role of the senior pastors is very important in transforming an individual and a church community to be more missional. Therefore, I used many intended questions to determine the characteristics of the leadership of the six churches when I did my interviews. Of course, those six senior pastors had their own uniqueness and strength; however, there were some overlapping elements. Articulating those elements would be beneficial in developing a relevant leadership pattern for the Korean immigrant missional churches.

In Chapter 1, I described that when I investigate the leadership of these leaders, I would use the framework of the transformational leadership model developed by Downton (1973) and Burns (1978). Since this leadership model seriously concerns the transforming process and raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northous 2004:170), it fits well into my research that also concerns the transformation of Korean immigrant Christians for mission. At the same time, this

model also focuses on raising both leaders' and followers' motivation and moral level. Therefore, I used four main characteristics of this transformational leadership model to reflect on the senior pastors' leadership practice: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized Influence. According to Northouse, the first factor, idealized influence, "describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers; followers identify with these leaders and want very much to emulate them . . . they are deeply respected by followers" (174-175). In terms of this factor, all of the six senior pastors fit well in this category because they had been accepted as strong role models by their church members.

Rev. Kwon of Seattle was considered a passionate role model leader. He said that he has always gone to the mission field first with passion and later said to his congregation, "Follow me!" Missionary Jung from this church said, "Rev. Kwon has kept showing his kingdom vision to the church. He never gives up. Instead, he has kept repeating and insisting it in order for the church members to follow that vision."

Rev. Song of Toronto had been a respected missionary among both the first and 1.5 generations. His co-worker, Rev. Jung pointed, "Rev. Song's biggest strength is his servant leadership. He is very devoted to serve others, and everybody knows it." Rev. Jung was right. What impressed me the most was that Rev. Song forced me to stay at his house instead of using a hotel. Even though I was very surprised at that time, I came to understand why he did that. It was because He was a servant leader. Toronto's Rev. Lim's passionate life attitude is also well known. Even though he has been a senior pastor of a mega-church, he has lived in a small rent apartment for twenty years.

All interviewees of Houston highly praised Rev. Chai because all the church

members were aware that Rev. Chai prays for three hours everyday for his congregation. Rev. Kim of Los Angeles has been called by his mission pastor, Rev. Kim, as “immigrant church itself,” implying that his life represents the immigrant life. Rev. Park of Vancouver has not been exceptional. Every church member had praises for his leadership. The mission pastor, Rev. Lee said, “In his heart, Rev. Park is filled with mission. He has kept focusing on mission, and all church members came to follow him.”

In fact, it was an encouraging process to interview those positive people. Honestly, not all pastors are respected by their congregation. However, these senior pastors who had led these Korean immigrant missional churches had been accepted as the ideal role models. A few interviewees had actually used the term “respect” to describe their senior pastors’ life and vision.

Inspirational Motivation. This second factor describes the leaders as the people “who communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring them through motivation to become committed to and a part of the shared vision in the organization” (175). Those leaders also seemed to be good motivators. They had actually motivated and transformed their churches and congregations.

As I introduced in Chapter 3, Rev. Kwon of Seattle had rapidly transformed his traditional and conservative church to be a dynamic mega-church. Rev. Chai of Houston had transformed the existing church to be the center of a house church movement among the Korean immigrant community. He had never given up on his house church vision, and that motivated his followers to follow him. Many interviewees of Vancouver admitted that Rev. Park was an excellent communicator who persuaded people well. Rev. Lim of Toronto was called as stimulator in a positive way

because of his magnificent capability to motivate people.

For this, those pastors have usually used the process of vision casting and sharing to persuade their congregation. They had communicated well with their congregation through the reasonable means such as logical and biblical preaching, showing video clips the churches made, repeated announcements, printed materials, and so on. Once the church community agreed to that vision or direction, these pastors have continually kept going to that vision or direction. With experiencing these steps, the followers came to trust those senior pastors.

Intellectual Stimulation. The third factor includes leadership “that stimulates followers to be creative and innovative, and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization” (177). As we discussed earlier, these pastors have had a strong conviction about soul harvest and mission. Many of them have studied in the western school. Above all, their perceptions of mission have been firm. So when they spoke about church or mission, they continued to emphasize the nature of the church as mission.

That’s not all. Through their relatively high educational background, they have stimulated people with their sharp knowledge with conviction. Rev. Lim of Toronto confirmed the responsibility of the church as saving the soul. He has repeatedly stimulated his church through his word and deed. I still remember his expression, “*Diaspora* has been God’s Plan and Mission. Therefore, we have to concern not only ‘gathering’ but also ‘scattering.’ And our immigration should be understood as a part of the ‘scattering.’” This kind of thinking was effective to move the people. He was not the only one.

When I interviewed these senior pastors, I have been stimulated so many times

because of their intellectual stimulation. Rev. Kim's concept of three generations' mission, Rev. Park's endless expectation about his church members' devotion, or Rev. Kwon's sacrificial attitude for his congregation have been very challenging for me. Surely, they have been transformational leaders. They have stimulated their followers well with their amazing thoughts.

Individualized Consideration. The last factor of the transformational leadership is "representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of followers" (177). Surprisingly, even though they had been the senior pastors of relatively big size church, they are concerned about individuals. Rev. Kwon of Seattle explained that relation was not something done by the head but by the heart. He said that he would do anything that his church member would like him to do. Rev. Song of Toronto had cared about his leadership team, consisting of elders, so he has visited their mission field with those elders. Rev. Chai has observed his people to notice the individuals' talents, and he let them be a group for the new project.

Rev. Lim's story of an old lady was a little more impressive. When they began their short-term mission project for Kazakhstan, a seventy eight year old woman wanted to join. However, due to her condition of glucosuria, the team had hesitated to let her go. To make a long story short, that old woman who finally joined the mission team played the most important role in that mission project.

When the mission team arrived at Kazakhstan, she had been the only one who could communicate with the local people in the conventional market place. There had been some Koryo people who could speak the old-style Korean language. Those people had lived there since 1937. Because the Russian government deported thousands of

Koreans to Central Asia, they could use the old and northern dialect, and the old woman of that church was the only one with knowledge of that dialect. Since Rev. Lim cared about that woman's meaningful ministry, they all had worked there meaningfully. The interviewees have already known that their senior pastors had cared and loved them. That was why they have followed those leaders.

The leadership styles of those six senior pastors can be called the transformational leadership style. They have been very sensitive for their congregations' need, motivation, development process, and most of all the usage of their full potential. Therefore, most interviewees agreed to their senior pastors' great influence to their churches, such as growth of church vitality in terms of saving the lost, ministry expansion of evangelization and cross-cultural mission, rapid church growth, and missional influence to other local churches as leading churches for mission. These six senior pastors are very transformational.

Therefore, other Korean immigrant church leaders should know and learn of these characteristics in order to shape their relevant leadership style. Remembering the fact that these senior pastors have been and are still good followers before they had become good leaders is very helpful. All of them have clearly remembered that they had lots of good leaders or teachers who had influenced them. Those leaders who had influenced the six senior pastors had been their past pastors or indirect teachers such as book writers, and even in the present time, they have lots of good missionaries or teachers who are still forming an intimate network for the positive influence. Those six missional senior pastors are still good learners.

Summary of Key Learnings

This chapter discussed about Korean Immigrant Christians and their mission. Up to now, we have discussed that relevant biblical interpretation and teaching, proper historical perception, and relevant theologizing regarding their self, may produce positive identity transformation for Korean immigrant Christians. But how can we cause this identity transformation? If we seriously take the steps that we have already discussed such as Korean immigrant history, biblical teaching about immigration, and theological consideration about immigrants' self, we cannot avoid the issue of the world mission, the new task from God for Korean immigrant Christians in the 21st Century. For this reason, we have to consider the following erudition from this chapter.

First of all, missional ecclesiology is extremely important. Usually, the senior pastor's missional ecclesiology shapes a church; therefore, how the senior pastor understands the church and how we help the senior pastor to view the church missionally are critical issues. As seen in my interviewees' cases, all of the senior pastors have kept this missional ecclesiology, understanding mission as the nature of the church. Naturally their ecclesiology has influenced all of their congregations, church structures, and ministries.

In terms of missional potential from Korean immigrant Christian's marginality experience, many people including the interviewees and me assumed a remote possibility. However, when we tried to elaborate the list, it has been very surprising because there have been amazing missional potential in our immigrant and marginality experience such as having another language and culture, especially experiencing the cross-cultural adjustment such as assimilation and acculturation, settling down in a new context, naturally overcoming their ethnocentrism, and so on.

Moreover, Korean immigrant Christians have experienced leaving their mother country, which prepared them not to fear leaving for a mission field. Also their experience with many difficulties in the new context also trained them to deal with the difficulties that they may encounter in the missional fields. In addition, their new kinds of passport or relatively higher financial capability can be quite beneficial for Korean immigrant Christians' active mission involvement. Even though they have not noticed these, God has been appending these missional resources into Korean immigrant Christians.

Furthermore, constitutions of these churches changed to be more missional. In the cases of six Korean missional churches, we can witness their continuous mission policy and education. Of course, this mission policy and education must be a contextualized one from deep consideration of the church's history, church members' characteristic, inclination, and human resource. There is no such perfect mission policy that can fit in every church. Therefore, every church must try to form its contextualized mission policy and educational program. Naturally, proper structure does follow, and through trial and error, each church comes to form their unique missional atmosphere. After all, the success of missional transformation of Korean immigrant church depends on whether they make mission as general church culture or not.

However, all these discussions are definitely related to the issue of leadership. Through this research, I intended to contribute to transform the Korean immigrant Christians and churches to be more missional. Therefore, investigating the six senior pastors' leadership practice has been beneficial because there we can discover several insights that are also relevant and legitimate in other Korean immigrant churches' settings.

In particular, Downton and Burns' Transformational leadership model can be one of the best leadership styles for the Korean immigrant churches' missional transformation. In fact, I have used the framework of this leadership model, and it has been a wonderful tool to describe the leadership styles of Korean immigrant missional churches' senior pastors.

As Northous explained (2004:174) to describe this leadership style, these Korean immigrant missional pastors have been characterized as ones who are seriously concerned with the followers' missional transformation and their fullest missional potential. They have actually been good role models whom the church members want to resemble; they have been the skillful motivators who caused the church members' actual movement; they have also stimulated their congregations through intellectual challenges; and they have shown deep concern regarding their church members' needs.

As shown, there has been tremendous missional potential in Korean immigrant Christians' marginality experience. In order to explore this, well developed missional leaders are necessary. The Korean immigrant missional leaders, therefore, have to keep the missional ecclesiology, understand their missional potential, and practice proper leadership styles like the transformational leadership model, concerning the followers' transformation and their fullest potential. The next chapter, as a conclusion of this study, summarizes the important findings, discusses missiological implications resulting from this study, and suggests for further study.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Missiological Implications

It has been ten years since I began struggling with my Korean immigrant life and issues. In fact, the meaning of life as a Korean immigrant Christian is an important issue. “What on earth does it mean to be an immigrant before God? Why has he called me as a Korean immigrant? In that context, what does he expect for me? I know that I must devote my life for the world mission enterprise, but how can I contextualize my “Korean immigrant-ness” into the issue of the world mission? As a leader, how can I assist the Korean immigrant churches and Christians to experience the identity transformation for mission as I have personally experienced?”

As noted earlier, even though there was a Korean *Diaspora*, and even though the Korean immigrant community in the United States and Canada has formed very strong church-centered community, Korean immigrant churches generally have not clearly understood their creative Christian identity and therefore can not articulated the relevant missional implications. Not many Korean immigrant churches or Christians have overcome their marginality-related immigrant issues and therefore have maximized their tremendous missional potential. Therefore, I have investigated these issues through this study.

In this concluding chapter, I attempt to bring together what has been discussed throughout this work in a succinct format that helps the reader to grasp the major findings. Also, I identify key missional implications of this study. Then I point ahead, showing possible doorways to related areas of further research.

Conclusions about Korean Immigrants and Their Mission

Employing grounded theory and the synthetic model of the contextual theology method, I have discussed the Korean immigrants' history, the Scripture, personal and communal human experience, and social location and change. Using the grounded theory approach, I did not attempt to prove or disprove a particular theory or assumption regarding Korean immigrant Christianity. Instead, I began more inductively with actual life, including such aspects as history, society, culture, and human experience.

Through historical and sociological study, I investigated the reality of Korean *Diaspora*, beginning in the 19th century with importation of the gospel and political pressure from Japan. Today we acknowledge that Koreans are the most widely dispersed people group in the world. At the same time, however, the missional implications of Korean immigrant Christians have not been seriously dealt with while they were confronting the normal immigrant issues of value, family, culture, generation, and relationship with others. As a result, not many Korean immigrant churches and Christians have moved beyond issues of being marginalized to becoming truly missional. Furthermore, not many Korean immigrant churches and Christians have fulfilled their tremendous missional potential. Instead, the majority of Korean immigrant Christians have carried on their missional involvement without really identifying their missional potential.

My study of three important themes from the Korean immigrant Christians' context, using of empirical, historical, social, biblical, theological, and missiological discussions, has yielded the following findings:

I have discovered that Korean immigrant churches and Christians can surely be

missional in ways similar to the six Korean immigrant churches that I visited and studied. Even though their levels of being missional and actual mission involvements may differ from each other, these churches have significant similarities and missional characteristics, such as contextualized and transformational leadership practice, firm and strong missional direction, long-term mission policy, on-going mission education, and contextualized missional structure. In particular, their deep consideration and teaching regarding the meaning of their Korean immigrant Christian-ness have enabled these churches to become active mission-focused churches.

Identity Transformation for Mission. In Chapter 1 (p. 5), I described my experience of an “identity transformative moment.” Due to my situation as an immigrant, I had become very passive and acquired a victimized perspective towards my life. Yet, with this “transformative moment,” I came to have a clear “missional identity,” which has influenced all dimensions of my immigrant life. I came to have a high self-esteem as an immigrant, interpret my immigrant situation as God’s blessing and privilege, perceive the new land as God’s territory, and see God’s kingdom dream as my specific calling and life’s goal.

In my field research process, therefore, I concentrated on searching if there were similar experiences in my interviewees’ lives or immigrant experiences. The answer was “Yes.” I found many similar experiences, biblical discoveries, and life interpretations in those people’s answers. In particular, the six senior pastors had already developed a positive self understanding, confidence in their new land, and a clear vision about world missions. They admitted that they had struggled with the immigrant issues, but had overcome, re-interpreted their immigrant-ness, and kept their historical and missional responsibility.

This observation meant that the pastors who demonstrated this point clearly had already experienced what I called "Identity Transformation" in some degree. This transformation seems to come from biblical truths, historical responsibility of world mission, or deep theological self-reflection. It is not certain which occurs first, but it seems that one affects the other or sometimes two or three revelations arise at the same time. Although the main focus of this research was not concerned with the pastors' depth of understanding regarding this matter, they generally seemed to have a rich understanding of the Scripture, theology, history and literature, which clearly influenced their identity transformation.

Naturally, those senior pastors' ideas influenced their congregation. Their leadership, biblical teaching, and ministry strategies seemed to influence the congregation, and many interviewees acknowledged that their life's change was influenced or prompted by their pastors. Even though the church-member interviewees did not seem to have as rich an understanding as their pastors did, they used many other terminologies to describe their degree of change. In fact, their answers revealed that their life's attitude had already been changed or was changing.

For example, they articulated that they had been changed from "negative/passive" to "positive," from "victimized" to "blessed," and from "American Dream" to "Kingdom Dream." This meant that in their lives there had been some degree of "Identity Transformation" and these changes had taken place through their church's missional ministry, mainly led by the senior pastors.

After having a legitimate perception regarding the biblical truth, positive self identity, and missional responsibility, these leaders have constantly tried to move their congregation towards that direction through many effective ministries as described in

Chapter 6. As a result, I found that their congregation had clearly perceived their “missional identity” as Korean immigrant Christians. A summary of my findings regarding this point is discussed below.

Scripture. In terms of Korean immigrant Christians and Scripture, *I found that the relevant biblical reflection and reinterpretation about their new self, new context, and new task have consciously or unconsciously caused their “Identity Transformation.”* And this experience encouraged them to change their passive and victimized life’s attitude to be very positive. They are no longer a passive ethnic minority but an active change agent for God’s history. Therefore, the relevant and legitimate biblical truths regarding the immigrant and marginality experiences must be elaborated and taught for Korean immigrant churches.

Self-identity. In addition, *a proper historical perception and a new theological paradigm regarding their self can also impact their identity transformation.* The concept of Korean immigrant Christians’ self-consciousness under God’s Providence is a very effective concept for this change. This stimulation naturally leads them to have the ultimate goal of the Kingdom dream, not the simple American/Canadian dream. To change their theological paradigm from the traditional theological paradigm, the writings of Korean American theologians such as Jung Young Lee, Sang Hyun Lee, and Andrew Sung Park can be helpful to provide new life meaning for Korean immigrant Christians. Practicing theology in their immigrant situation has helped these theologians develop a relevant paradigm for Korean immigrant Christians’ identity transformation.

Mission. Throughout these processes of relevant biblical teaching, proper history perception, and relevant theologizing regarding their self, naturally leads us to consider

the ultimate purpose of God for the Korean immigrant Christians. Here, I can use the word “Missional Identity Transformation.” Regarding this matter, *I have discovered that the missional ecclesiology of the church is extremely important. The interviews and visitations also revealed the hidden benefits for mission from their immigrant and marginality experience.* They are in another language and culture, experiencing the cross-cultural adjustment and communication, experiencing the leaving of their mother country, dealing with many unexpected difficulties, having a different passport, and providing higher financial capability.

This study also shows some common characteristics of Korean immigrant missional churches and leaders. The most important concept for being missional as Korean immigrant churches is “consistency.” For example, continuous mission policy and education is strongly needed. Proper church structure is needed as well. In terms of leadership, the transformational leadership style is most recommended, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The leaders should expect the congregations’ fullest potential and search for transformation in the journey to become more missional.

As a conclusion, the proper teaching of biblical truth in terms of immigration, the relevant perception of Korean immigrant history, and the new transformative theological paradigms can result in their identity transformation for mission. In achieving this, we need creative church leaders who have the transformational leadership style and capability of application in the contextualized strategy. I believe these elements would explore Korean immigrant Christians’ missional potential for the world mission.

Missiological Implications

Four significant missional implications arise from this research.

1. The first missiological implication is that *this study has articulated the strategic value of the Korean Diaspora for world mission*. Human migration has been a fact in history. “People have been on the move from the earliest times, often over great distances and for a wide variety of reasons, including trade, epidemics, economic opportunities, asylum, war, persecution, natural disasters, even adventure” (Hanciles 2003:146). This phenomenon is very important for Christian Mission because Christian history proves that Christian expansion has often been connected with this migration movement. Pocock’s argument regarding this matter is insightful:

Migrating populations bring many resources to their new countries, not the least of which are their religious beliefs. The impact of this trend should not be underestimated. Historically, the spread of religions through migration may be seen in the expansion of Christianity in the first five centuries AD, then again in what Kenneth Latourette called the “Great Century” from 1815 to 1915(1939). (Pocock et. al 2005:49)

Hanciles states, “Recent migration movements, as a critical dimension of contemporary global transformations, have the potential to significantly affect the geographic and demographic contours of the world’s major religions and provide a vital outlet for proselytism and missionary expansion” (2003:146). In other words, the migration phenomenon must seriously be dealt with for world missions today, and this is the reason I am focusing on Korean immigrants’ missional value in this study.

It is not difficult to find out these immigrants’ missional potential. The Jewish *Diaspora* had been one of the parts of this migration, and in fact an important element of mission. Wherever the Jews had gone, they had built synagogues, showed their faith, and produced many God-fearers among the gentiles (De Ridder 1975:77-84). And later,

their synagogues had become the bases for the advancement of the gospel. In fact, these God-fearers became “the steel rails on which the Christian movement expanded” (Winter 2000:198). Acts 8:1 and 11:19 confirm this fact again that the passively dispersed Christian became passionate missionary people. While Patrick’s mission to the Goths had taken place passively through his captivity situation, the Moravians’ missionary movement to other countries was intentional. We have witnessed many cases of human migration and its influence even in the 21st Century, such as Africans to Europe and Asians to North America. What is clear is that this migration phenomenon has been and can be useful for our Christian expansion. Effective mission often happens as much by migration or dispersion as full-time “sent” missionaries.

In the light of this fact, Korean *Diaspora* in the 21st Century has been an occurrence under God’s providence. God has spread the most enclosed and exclusive ethnic people group, often called “the hermit nation” (Griffis 1888), throughout the world to become the most widely dispersed people group in a very short amount of time. Through it, Korean *Diaspora* has been unknowingly prepared as God’s effective missional tool through their Koreanized Christianity forming through the rapid church growth, and missional potentials forming through their immigrant experience.

In fact, today’s Korean *Diaspora* has been well prepared for mission linguistically and culturally. Furthermore, in the case of Korean immigrants in North America, they have the capabilities to overcome the ethnocentrism through their multi-ethnic and multi-cultural experience, to leave the familiar place again through their immigrant experience, to take on many challenges from their new acculturation process, to use their relatively abundant financial resource, to travel freely with American/Canadian passports, and so on. With their passionate faith pattern, surely,

Korean *Diaspora* can be one of God's strategic tools for the world mission today. Therefore, the articulation of the strategic value of Korean immigrant churches and Christians for mission is one of clear missiological implications.

2. The second implication of this study is that *I found some effective ways to stimulate and produce "Identity Transformation" for mission among Korean immigrant churches and Christians*. Both my personal experience and interview results proved that the leaders of the Korean immigrant church must maintain a proper biblical understanding in terms of their immigration (self, context, and task), a relevant perception of Korean immigrant history, and new transformative theological paradigms because these elements can assist their church ministry and form the missional church through people's personal and communal identity transformation.

3. Another value of this study is that *I have investigated three important themes for providing a contextualized mission theology for Korean immigrant community in North America*. Through it, I have discussed many insightful themes, concepts, theories, social changes, and human experiences in the light of identity transformation for the world mission of Korean immigrant Christians. Since there has been no one who has dealt with these issues especially in the realm of mission, this study can be a stepping-stone for developing a mission theology for the Korean immigrant community.

4. Also, *this study provides a practical material to stimulate Korean immigrant churches and Christians especially for assisting the missional ministry*. What I learned from this research was that the depth of biblical, theological, and missiological understandings varied between pastors and church members. Even among pastors or church leaders saw the issues differently. Therefore, the relevant biblical truth, the historical information, sociological issues, various theological concepts, and even

practical leadership practice introduced through this study will be valuable for pastors and Christian leaders.

5. The last missiological implication of this study is its later influence. *Through articulating the missional potential of Korean immigrant Christians, it stimulates not only the Korean immigrant community but potentially other ethnic communities as well.* Today, there are over 70,000,000 Chinese *Diaspora*, 30,000,000 Indian *Diaspora*, 9,000,000 Filipino *Diaspora*, and 3,000,000 Japanese *Diaspora* around the world (Min Young Jung 2004:4).

Even though the percentage of Christians in each group varies, their missional potential is the same. They would be an effective strategic tool for the world mission movement if they experience their identity transformation and understand their missional responsibility. Again, due to articulating Korean immigrants' missional potential in this study, the global church may notice and pay attention to the legitimate place of Korean immigrant churches for the world mission.

Suggestions for Further Research and Implementation

Up to now, I have struggled with the issue of “What” and “For what” of Korean immigrant churches and Christians. Now it is time to encounter the issue of “How” and “What kinds.” As I introduced in Chapter 1, my ultimate life’s goal is exploring our missional potential and maximizing our world mission enterprise. Therefore, this study would be my theological foundation in carrying on my future ministry for mission. Here I want to add both “implementations” that I have tried and will try in/through my actual ministry setting and “further expected researches.”

1. I have used what I found through this research in several teaching sessions,

such as special lectures for missionary candidate training, sermons for Sunday worship service, and a presentation for a mission forum for Korean-American Christians.

Through these opportunities, I have shared what I have struggled with as a Korean immigrant Christian leader and what I have discovered as I discussed in this study.

My teaching session consisted of six sections following the order of this study.

(1) Introduction: sharing the dilemma of an immigrant life through my personal story and raising “identity transformation” experience and the issue of a disadvantaged situation, (2) historical and sociological approach: from sharing the Korean *Diaspora* history to raising up our responsibility for God, (3) biblical approach: lecturing the biblical meaning of self, context, and task identities, (4) theological approach: bring up the issue of marginality and proper theological perception of our immigrant-ness, (5) missiological approach: pointing out the strategic value of Korean immigrants and their missional potential, and (6) conclusion: articulating that our unique situation is both a “privilege” and a “responsibility” for the kingdom of God.

The response of people has been very enthusiastic. The majority of people identified my issues as theirs, expressed their deep impression about what I shared, and admitted their identity transformation through my lecture, sermon, and presentation. In addition, I shared what I found about missional ministry to the six Korean immigrant churches and the senior pastors’ leadership practice, and the response of the pastors was the same. These experiences gave me more conviction regarding “identity transformation” for mission.

2. For a practical ministry setting of Korean immigrant churches, an actual discipling program may come out from this study. That discipling program should seriously consider all of the elements of this study such as historical, sociological,

biblical, theological, and missiological approaches to Korean immigrant Churches and Christians. I may use this program not only for discipling the church congregation, but also for training Korean immigrant missionaries. We need contextualized training material to maximize our missional potential.

3. More necessary research is investigating the unique portion of the world mission that only Korean immigrant Christians may contribute to with their uniqueness. As Jewish *Diaspora* had contributed for mission through their synagogue structure and faith patterns, there must be a clear portion of missional contribution that Korean immigrant Christians can offer with their uniqueness formed by Koreanized Christianity and marginality experience.

4. The more I study this issue, the more I come to see the need of the same research for the next generation Koreans. As a typical first immigrant generation pastor, I have focused primarily on first-generation Korean immigrants and churches. For this reason, more in-depth similar studies of the 1.5 and 2nd generations could provide further learnings relevant to this topic; Korean immigrant and their mission.

5. I may take the same steps that I had taken in carrying out more research but in different contexts. Even though my ultimate purpose of study and ministry is maximizing Korean *Diaspora*'s missional potential around the world, I have just taken the case of Korean immigrants in the North America due to several limitations. If the same study can be done in the case of Korean immigrants in the South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa, there would be more contextualized results and implications in that setting, through which we can contribute to the world mission with effectiveness.

6. In addition, I expect to see similar research, exploring other ethnic groups' missional potentials in the North American setting. I believe that other ethnic churches

have also had their own unique immigrant experiences that may expand their missional potential. This research certainly fertilize their Christian communities and enhance their missional contributions for the world Christianity. If so, network among these communities would result in creative synergy for the world mission enterprise.

7. Finally, as a Korean immigrant church leader, I expect further study of contextualized and transformational leadership model for Korean immigrant church setting. Of course, the transformational leadership model of Downton (1973) and Burns (1987) is effective, but we should make attempts to discover the best leadership style for Korean immigrant churches' missional transformation. As I discussed in chapter two, there have been many sensitive issues that the leaders of the Korean immigrant community must deal with such as culture, language, generation, value, role and status, etc. The deeper synthesis with these elements, therefore, may provide a fine leadership model that is contextualized and transformational for the Korean immigrant community for the world mission movement.

Final Thought

In history, *Diaspora* is a very strategic tool for the world mission. The Jewish *Diaspora* in the first century had been a third cultural group beyond their own ethnic, linguistic and cultural unity. They had easily overcome their culturally enclosed and exclusive-mindset, stiff attitude in law, and the tradition of the elders because of their new circumstances (Min Young Jung 2004:2).

Let's think about the case of Apostle Paul. He was born under a Jewish *Diaspora* father who had a Roman citizenship. Paul grew up in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 21:39), knowing and freely using Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic languages. Even though he

understood the importance of evangelizing to the Jews, he also knew that he was called as the apostle to the Gentiles. He could adjust wherever he went and could freely use the concepts of Palestine-Jewish, Greek-Jewish, and Greek-Gentile (Verkuyl 1978:113).

Therefore, Paul, as part of the *Diaspora*, had been the one whom God had prepared for the cross-cultural mission. That's not all. The main characters of the mission of the early church had come out from Jewish *Diaspora* such as Barnabas, Silas, Luke, John, also called Mark Timothy, Priscilla, and Aquila. As we see, *Diaspora* is God's intended Providence, not an accidental situation.

Interestingly, the period of Korean *Diaspora* has been sudden during the last century. Similar to Jewish people, Korean had been a very exclusive people group for more than five thousand years. However, God has spread them to the world with their Koreanized Christianity. As the world mission has been achieved through spreading the people from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, there has been God's clear intention for Korean *Diaspora*.

Through deep consideration and reflection of its history, society, religion, human experience in their immigrant circumstances and the characteristics of Koreanized Christianity, God's will has been very clear. That is using the Korean *Diaspora* for the world mission as he had used the Jewish *Diaspora*. He has spread the people, and moved with them. God moves through space and time for his people. It seems only appropriate that we move with God for his people and his kingdom.

On April 6th of 2008, The Korean Church of Dallas that I have served since August of 2006 as the senior pastor was able to send the first missionary from the congregation for 43 years of our history. I would like to finish this dissertation with presenting a part of my sermon for the missionary sending service. This part of the

sermon reflects well what I discussed in this study.

Today, as one of *Korean Diaspora*, I and you should be aware of historical responsibility for the work of God. As you know, God has called immigrants as a strategic tool for the world mission. For example, the greatest missionary in human history was the apostle Paul. Dear brothers and sisters, Paul was born as a son of immigrant in Tarsus, not from Jerusalem. He was one of *Jewish Diaspora*. Because of that he was able to speak Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic freely. He was able to accept and embrace many different cultures such as Palestinian, Greek, and Roman. The result of that, he could successfully fulfill the great mission of God. Many co-workers such as Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Priscilla, and Aquila from the early churches were from the same kind of backgrounds. They were either immigrants or the descendent of the immigrants and they were "Cosmopolitans." This is the mystery which God has put in our immigrants' life. We all need to face this fact ... Do you see that? There are so much missional potential in immigrants' life. I confirmed it once again through Mr. Kim's family who are going to go to Japan as a missionary. First, we have learned how to speak English. Nowadays, speaking English is a great tool for the world mission. Right now, not only in Korea, but Japan, and China, the missional value of speaking English is beyond our imagination. Mr. Kim is using it as the missional tool as well. Not only that we already have multicultural experiences. What I am saying is that we aren't like ordinary people. Therefore it is easier for us to adjust in a new setting of life or adopt new culture ... Also we are no longer bound up by ethnocentrism. We throw away self-centered mindset while we are living with other ethnic groups. We already have an experience of leaving. We can go anywhere and adjust. What about hardship? Is there anybody who hasn't suffered because of immigrant? We can stand well in hardships. We also have different citizenship. I have a Canadian citizenship and Mr. Kim family has the U.S. citizenship and they can speak Korean as well. That is why they are able to work in North Korean School in Japan. Speaking different languages and other conditions become powerful tools for the world mission. Lastly we are also financially established. Dear my brothers and sisters, here is my point ... Without notice, we are already equipped the great missional potential in ourselves. Therefore we need to open our spiritual eyes to see and obey what God has commanded us to do. I am challenging you to go beyond the American Dream and seek for the Kingdom Dream. My lovely brothers and sisters of The Korean Church of Dallas, it is our opportunity to please our God, the Creator of heavens and the earth. (Kim 2008:5-6)

Appendix A

Table 3: Numerical Growth of Korean Immigrant Churches
in the United States and Canada (1903-2004)

Year	Number of KIC	Year	Number of KIC	Year	Number of KIC	Year	Number of KIC
1903	1	1980	600	1994	3288	2001	3171
1967	30	1985	1000	1997	3334	2002	3404
1972	150	1989	1700	1999	3415	2003	3528
1975	300	1991	2617	2000	2900	2004	3665

Table 4: Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States (2004)

State	Number	State	Number	State	Number	State	Number	State	Number
AK	22	HI	53	ME	137	NJ	169	SD	1
AL	16	IA	10	MI	22	NM	5	TN	21
AR	8	ID	18	MN	4	NV	20	TX	136
AZ	35	IL	192	MO	22	NY	357	UT	10
CA	1129	IN	18	MS	5	OH	36	VA	165
CO	49	KS	19	MT	2	OK	23	VT	2
CT	18	KY	12	NC	51	OR	37	WA	122
DE	8	LA	10	ND	1	PA	104	WI	8
FL	64	MA	38	NE	2	RI	5	WV	1
GA	116	MD	142	NH	7	SC	19	WY	2

Table 5: Percentage of Korean Immigrants in Major Protestant Denominations
in the United States (2004)

Denomination	Percentage	Number	Denomination	Percentage	Number
Presbyterian	41.6 %	1381	Evangelical & Holiness	6.8 %	227
Baptist	13.4 %	445	Independent	3.5 %	115
Methodist	11 %	366	Others	1 %	
Pentecostal	9 %	300	No response	11.2 %	374

(Source: Christian Today Daily: January 6, 2005
http://christiantoday.us/sub_read.html?uid=4759§ion=section12)

Appendix B

Interview Schedule for the Participants

* Interviewees: Senior pastor, mission pastor, focused group, new convert, missionary

1. Personal Inquiry

- a. Name, gender, family composition, age & which generation (1st, 1.5 or 2nd)
- b. Educational and occupational background both in Korea and

America/Canada

- c. Role in the present church and mission experience

2. Immigrant Experience

- a. When, why, and how did you become an immigrant? How long have you been an immigrant?

- b. What have you done for a living in America/Canada?

- c. How do you describe your assimilation process (language, culture, food, etc)?

- d. Throughout your immigrant life, what were the best and the worst experiences?

3. Immigrant Identity

- a. How do you understand your immigration in relationship to God's plan?

- b. Which term is relevant to describe your life? Korean, American/Canadian, Korean-American/Canadian, or American/Canadian-Korean? Why?

- c. When you experienced discrimination by an American or a Canadian, how did you respond to it? Would you explain your feeling(s) about it? How did you deal with it? How does this impact your Christian life?

d. Have you ever changed your religion after becoming an immigrant? If so, why and what?

4. The Scripture

a. What are the meaningful biblical themes or passages in terms of your immigrant experience? Any reason?

b. What kinds of biblical figures do you prefer or dislike? Have you ever identified your immigrant life with these biblical figures?

c. What and where can you see in the Scripture that God cares about immigrants?

d. What kinds of biblical passages or themes need to gain immigrants' attention? What themes or passages should be taught to Korean immigrant Christians?

5. Mission

a. How do you understand "mission"? How do you describe it if someone asks you what it is?

b. If you become active in mission work after your immigration, what was the motivation? Any special reason or event for beginning your mission work here?

c. Do you think immigrant experience is beneficial for doing cross-cultural mission? If so, what and how?

d. What ways would you say the mission practice of your church is different from other Korean Churches in your city? (Why do you think some Korean immigrant churches are not much involved in cross-cultural mission?)

6. Mission and Leadership (for church leaders)

a. What or who made you focus upon missional ministry? Any model or event?

- b. What do you emphasize when teaching your congregation regarding “Korean Immigrant-ness” and “mission”? Would you describe your thought?
- c. How do you share your vision and how do you motivate your congregation?
- d. What are important things that Korean immigrant church must propose to Korean immigrants? Which characteristics or qualifications would you recommend to other Korean immigrant church leaders? What must they change?

e. (If the interviewee is not a leader of a mission focused Korean church)
What does your church need to be more missional?

7. Mission and Leadership (for church member)

- a. Would you describe your personal and congregational changes after the present senior pastor came to your church?
- b. What does he emphasize to his congregation regarding mission practice? Do you think it is fair to you and other church members?
- c. How does your senior pastor share his vision, motivate people, and lead people to the goal? Do you think it is effective for you and other church members?
- d. What must the Korean immigrant church propose to Korean immigrants? Which characteristics or qualifications must Korean immigrant church leaders have? What must they change? What are the best and the worst things you have watched in Korean immigrant leaders’ lives?
- e. (If the interviewee is a recent convert) Would you explain how and what happened in your life to become a Christian? What attracted you to join this church? What did you most need and what did you expect when you became a Christian? What do you like and dislike about your pastor or church?

f. (If the interviewee is a missionary) What is the main reason that you became a missionary? What is the relationship between your decision to be a missionary and your immigrant life? What do you think about becoming a missionary from the place of an immigrant? What is the benefit(s) of immigrant experience in your actual mission field?

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